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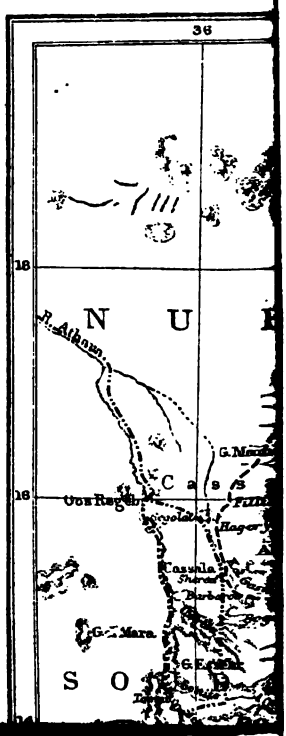
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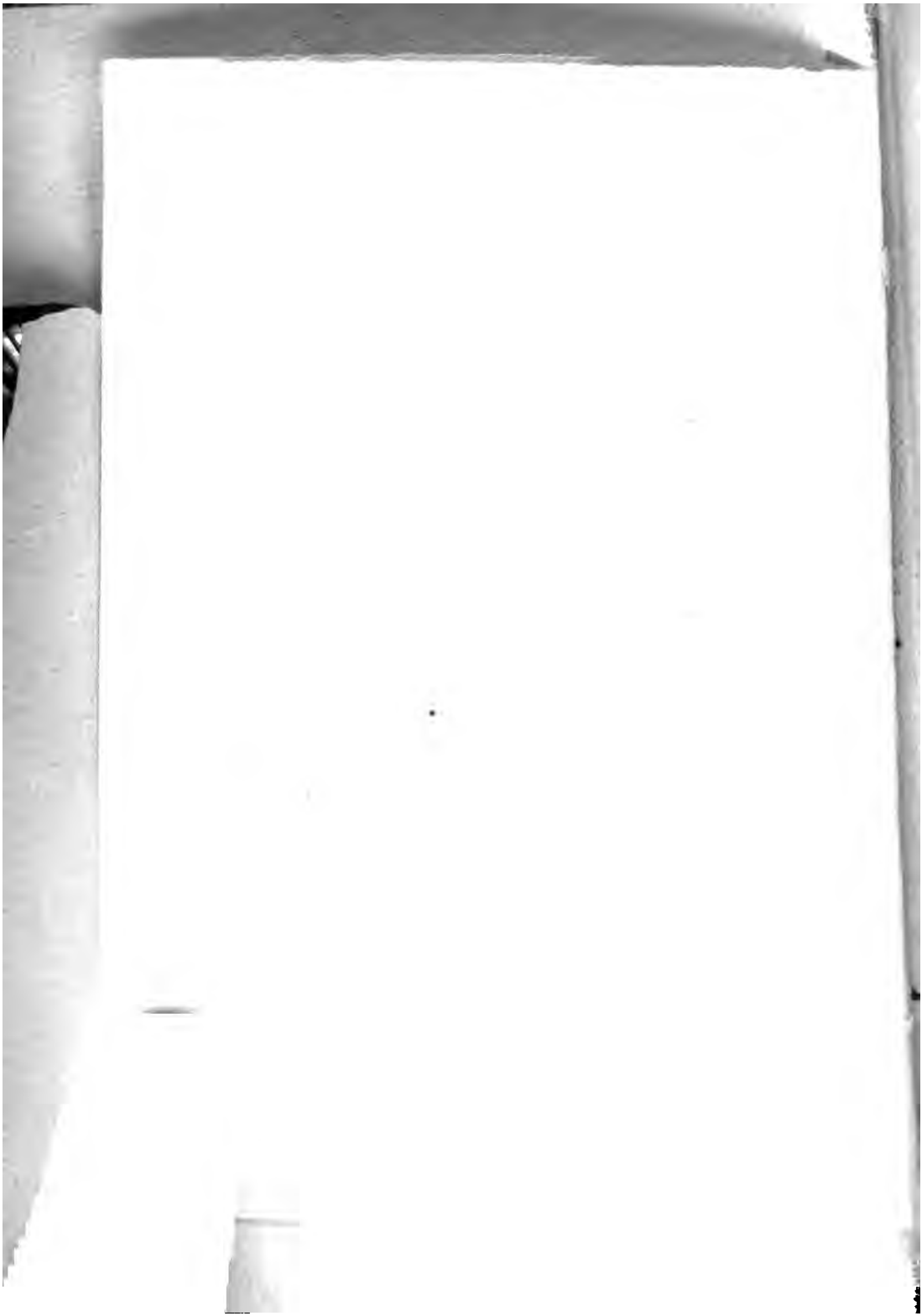


THREE AIBARO WOMEN.

OF THE SOUDAN

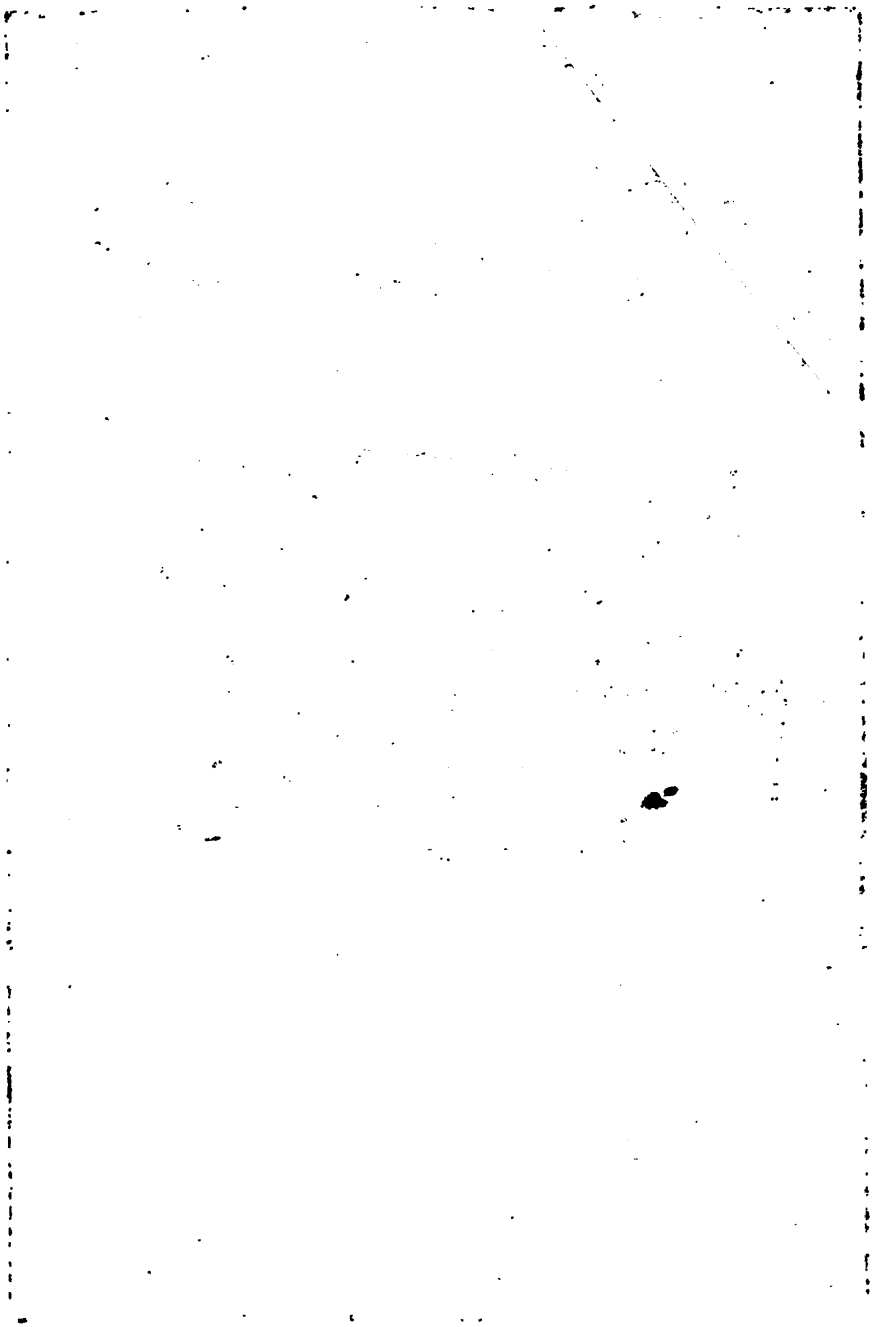
AN ACCOUNT OF

AND ADVENTURES
IN THE
SOUDAN

BY

JAMES, M.A., F.R.G.S.

NEW YORK
AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS



THE

WILD TRIBES OF THE SOUDAN

AN ACCOUNT OF

TRAVEL AND SPORT CHIEFLY IN THE BASÉ COUNTRY

BEING

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND ADVENTURES DURING
THREE WINTERS SPENT IN THE
SOUDAN

BY

F. D. JAMES, M.A., F.R.G.S.

NEW YORK
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TO THE MEMORY OF

THE HONOURABLE

JOHN CONSTABLE MAXWELL,

Our Companion

ON A PREVIOUS JOURNEY IN THE SOUDAN,

THIS RECORD OF OUR WANDERINGS

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

R. F. P.

316343

PREFACE.

I FEEL that some apology is due for adding another to the numerous books of travel that have been written, during the last few years, on Africa. My excuse must be the interest always taken in whatever relates to Africa and the African, and the fact that a considerable part of the ground traversed — namely, that through the Basé country — was *terra incognita*, and had not been explored previous to our visit.

The Basé, or Kunama, tribe, who inhabit this district, are far more uncivilised than any other people who dwell in that part of Africa. They are of a totally different type; much blacker, and more closely allied to the pure negro, than any of their neighbours. To penetrate into the heart of their country, had for some time been with me a cherished project; and I had often discussed its feasibility with Egyptian officials and others in the Soudan, during previous journeys made in the country, but had been invariably told that it was next to impossible to accomplish my desire.

On all hands we were informed that the Basé were most treacherous, and that, although there was not much danger of their attacking so large a party as we were by day, they would not hesitate to take advantage of us during the darkness of night, if an opportunity presented itself. My narrative will show that a little tact and care on our part overcame these

obstacles, and we became the best of friends. Our chief difficulty was in first entering their country, and in setting their minds at rest as to our peaceable and non-political intentions towards them. On one occasion only, when our party was divided, we had good reason to believe that they meditated an attack; but, on their discovering that we were apprised of their intentions, they apparently gave up their project, and we never had cause to suspect them again.

The only travellers that I could hear of, who had ever ventured into this country, were a Mr. and Mrs. Powell, who, together with their child, had been treacherously murdered by the Basé; and even they had not advanced very far into their territory.

The map of the Basé country that accompanies this volume was made by my brother, Mr. W. D. James, assisted by Mr. Aylmer, from astronomical observations taken with a sextant every night. They carefully mapped out our route every day by aid of the sextant and prismatic compass. It adds a portion, however small, to the map of Africa.

The woodcuts were all done in New York, from my brother's and Mr. Aylmer's photographs, and are specimens of a branch of art in which Americans excel.

I would, in conclusion, ask the indulgence of the public for this effort of one who for the first time publishes a record of his daily life and experiences in Africa.

F. L. J.

SEPT. 19, 1883.

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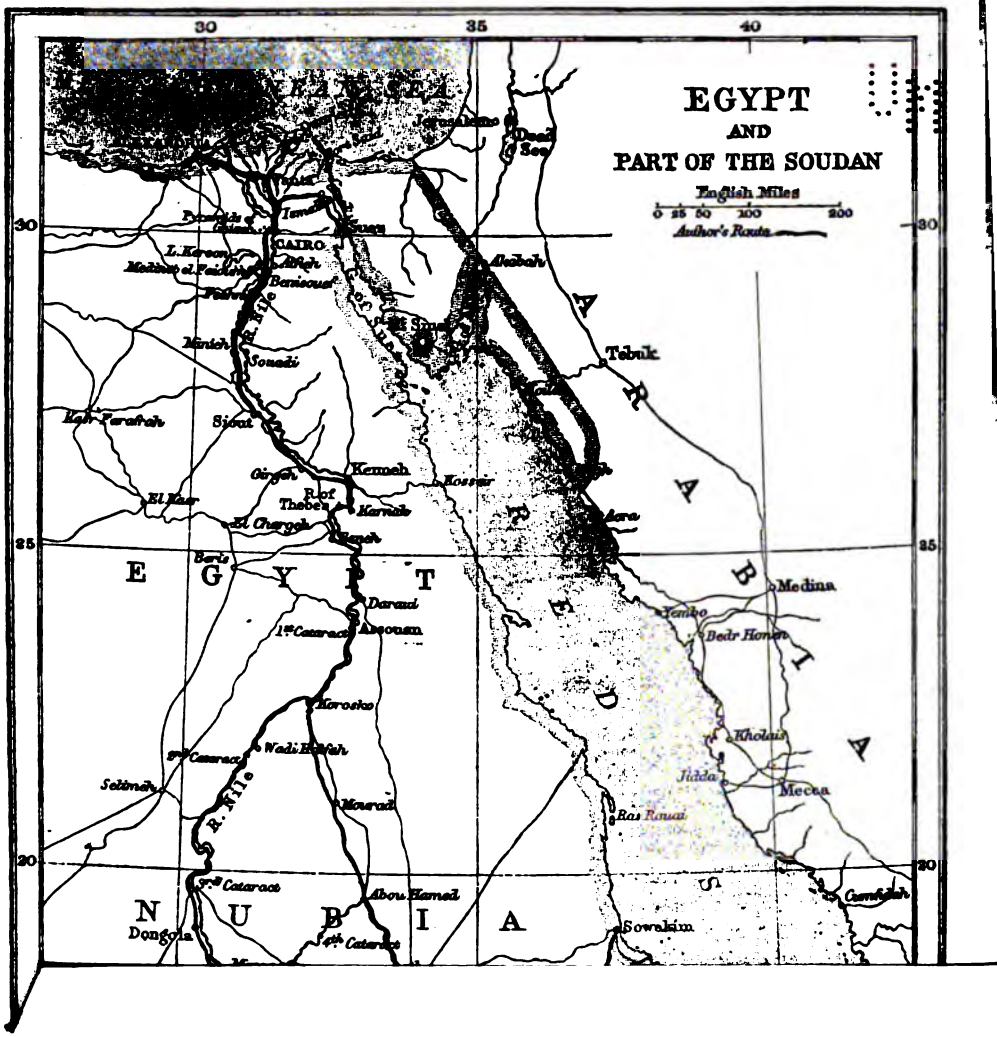
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THE WILD TRIBES OF THE SOUDAN.

CHAPTER I.

We leave Cairo for the Egyptian Soudan. — The Basé Country. — Egyptian Officials. — Quarantine Regulations. — Our Party. — Servants of the Party. — Ali the Cook. — Shereef the Staid and Stately Waiter. — Mahoom. — The Agra's Passengers.

On Dec. 1, 1881, we left Cairo for Suez, *en route* for the Egyptian Soudan, with the intention of exploring the Basé country, a small tract lying between Takar (an Egyptian province, of which Cassala is the principal town) and Abyssinia. We were going chiefly for sport; and, the Basé country being almost if not entirely unknown to Europeans, we hoped to be successful, especially as it had not previously been shot over, and, moreover, lies in a part of Africa inhabited by many different kinds of game. We knew that in all probability there would be considerable difficulties to encounter in exploring the country; as only a small part of it, and that a part where there is little or no game, belongs to Egypt, and consequently no help could be expected, but rather hindrance, from the Egyptian officials in endeavouring to carry out our programme. They naturally dislike the possibility of sportsmen running the risk of getting into trouble with tribes bordering on their frontier.

The Basé are the *bêtes noires*, moreover, of all that part of

the Soudan, and have the character of being a very treacherous and unfriendly people; so that it was not only on the part of the Egyptian officials that we expected to have obstacles thrown in our way, but we felt sure that we should have considerable difficulty in getting camel-drivers and servants to undertake the journey. Then, too, the Basé, dwelling as they do between Egyptian and Abyssinian territory, would naturally be jealous of any one entering their country through that of their powerful Egyptian neighbours, and might think, that, instead of being bent purely on travel and sport, we were really come on behalf of the Egyptian Government, to endeavour to squeeze taxes out of them, and to reduce them to submission.

On our arrival in Cairo, we heard that we should probably be delayed for some three or four weeks before we could find a steamer to take us to Souakim (the port on the Red Sea from which we wished to make our start into the interior), owing to the existing quarantine regulations. In consequence of the prevalence of cholera in India and at Aden, all steamers going from an Arabian to an African port were subjected to quarantine on their arrival.

The only *regular* steamers calling at Souakim are thos of the Khedivial Company; and they, as a rule, call at ports on both sides of the Red Sea, in their voyages up and down. The steamers of the Rubbatino Company are also advertised to stop at Souakim, but they are, at the best of times, most irregular; and, when we wished to go, their "fleet" had been reduced to one steamer, the "Messina," and even she had, for the time being, been withdrawn from the service, owing to the quarantine.

Most of the steamers, moreover, were keeping to the Arabian ports, while several were being done up at Alexandria: so that there was only one steamer, the "Zagazig," performing

the service between Suez and the African ports, and she had started before we had collected our party together.

In this dilemma, we fortunately were able to induce the British India Company's steamer "Agra" to stop for us at Souakim, on her way out to India. This was most lucky for us, as we grudged spending more of the cool weather at Cairo than we could help; the heat in the Soudan becoming very trying by the spring.

The "Agra" was delayed in the canal, and instead of leaving Suez on Dec. 2, as she should have done, did not start until the 7th: this was, however, fortunate, as one of our party (Colvin) was to join us there from Australia; and, had she started on the right day, he would have been too late, as he did not arrive until the 4th, running it rather fine. He had come straight from Adelaide, in the "Chimborazo," one of the Orient line, without touching anywhere: and she had been a few days late in starting.

Before embarking at Suez, I may as well introduce our party to my readers. It consisted of seven, besides servants, —G. Percy V. Aylmer, R. B. Colvin, E. Lort Phillips, my two brothers, the Doctor, and myself. Of these, all except Colvin and the Doctor had made an expedition together, during the previous winter, into the Bogos country, on the Abyssinian frontier; and my brothers and myself had, four years previous to that, travelled *viâ* the Nile and Atbara Rivers, as far as the River Settite: so that we were not novices in African travel, and, moreover, —a most important consideration in undertaking such an expedition, —we felt that we should get on well together.

As we were so large a number of Europeans, we thought that it would be prudent to have a doctor in the party. I undertook the task of finding one, and found it no sinecure.

As I could not hear privately of any one willing to accompany our party, who seemed suitable, I considered the best thing to do was to advertise in the principal medical journals; I also put an advertisement in the "Times" and "Athenæum." The result was, I was inundated with replies. Some of these were most amusing.

The evident difficulties some of my correspondents found in describing their personal qualifications may be best illustrated by the following extracts from some of their letters, which I here subjoin. One, after stating that his age was forty-three, and that he had never had a day's illness, went on to say that he possessed "a disinfectant, unknown to the profession, for the prevention of fevers; also, the means of curing the same without medicine." He had had more experience in the treatment of fever than most medical men in England. His concluding sentence we all thought delicious, and felt he was quite the man to rough it in Central Africa. I again quote from his letter: "I like a cigar after my dinner and supper, with a glass of mild ale, *and meals at regular hours;* so that I call myself an abstemious man, and one to be depended upon day or night." Another applicant kindly observed, "If the expedition is of a scientific character, I should not object to take professional charge, provided that I am allowed to obtain a sufficient stock of Jaborandi (?), Warburg's tincture, and other prophylactics against marsh-fever, without which it would be unsafe to venture into that country, *or to permit others to do so.* Furnished with these, I would, using proper precautions as regards sanitation, food, and clothing, face the Terai or the Gold Coast without fear or hesitation. I have an excellent constitution, delight in tropical climate (barring swamp), am never sea-sick, and accustomed to rough travel, and to carry my life in my hand. Like all old Westminster

scholars of my time, I can cook, do any kind of rough-and-ready housework, row, fish, shoot, and, I'm sorry to admit, *fight* if occasion demands it, and also keep my temper under almost any provocation. I have the reputation of being a scholar, and I believe I may say a gentleman. I forgot to state that I pick up languages rapidly, am a tolerable *connoisseur* in art and cookery, play whist, piquet, and chess well for an amateur, and don't drink or gamble; and that I am a member of the Church of England, as my father's son should be."

We felt that the field for this gentleman to display his taste in art as well as in cookery would be somewhat limited in the countries we proposed visiting, although his pugilistic skill might prove of value. We, however, fully appreciated the kind care he was anxious to take of us. His concluding sentence was most cheering in case of any sinister accident: "I am engaged in devising a series of tests to determine whether people are really dead before they are buried; and Egypt is a good country to make observations of this sort in."

One applicant wrote of a man whom he eulogized as follows: "It will be found on inquiry, that Dr. —— is highly and most respectably connected. He is good-looking though unassuming, jovial yet refined, and strictly abstemious. He is about to commence practice for himself. When he does, his unpretending amenity, simplicity of manners and deportment, combined with his great acumen and high professional attainments, are sure to meet with success."

We felt that this gentleman's "deportment and unpretending amenity" would be quite thrown away on the wild tribes of the Soudan; and passed on to another letter in which the writer, after enumerating every place marked on the most extensive map of the West Coast of Africa yet published, all

of which places he stated he had visited, went on to say he had "attended Ocko Jumbo's son, made the acquaintance of King Ja Yj at Opobo," and that he was "on the most intimate terms with King Ockei." We felt that this gentleman was accustomed to altogether too high society for us, and we could promise him no royal acquaintances in the part of the Soudan we were about to visit. I shall only trouble my readers with one more quotation, and that from a telegram I received from a French doctor; in which, after stating his terms, which were "*quatre mille francs pour deux mois, payés d'avance, et tous les frais du voyage*," he went on to say that he required "*une chambre à part, et ne veut pas être obligé de suivre ces messieurs dans leurs excursions de chasse*"!

For servants we had with us George Reason, an Englishman who had accompanied us during our journey into the Bogos country; and two Swiss, Jules and Anselmier; these made up the European contingent. The native servants that we took from Cairo consisted of Suleiman Daoud, our head man and a most excellent fellow; he had been with us on our last expedition, and was for nearly five years with Sir Samuel Baker when he went as head of the Egyptian government expedition to the White Nile and equatorial lakes: Shereef the waiter, very staid and stately, never ruffled or put out by any thing, slow, but an excellent man in his particular line, keeping the canteen, his special care, in first-rate condition throughout the entire journey: Ali the cook, a native of the Soudan, a most important functionary, and a very good servant; he was with us during the winter of 1877–78, and on one occasion when with us at Cassala, he asked leave to get drunk, urging as his excuse that some gentlemen, with whom he had travelled several times previously, always allowed him to do so at that place; he had consequently got to look upon it as a sort of

special privilege belonging to the place; a lecture was delivered to him on the sin of drunkenness, which I believe he regarded as a sort of permission to get drunk; for he got very drunk, but not before he had sent us up a most excellent dinner, and, as far as I know, he never afterwards offended in this respect; Mahoom, a coal-black negro from the White Nile, a boy of sixteen, speaking both English and Arabic. Mahoom was originally captured by some slave-traders on the White Nile, in a raid that they made against a village; he was freed by Col. Gordon, the late governor-general of the Soudan, and given to Dr. Felkin at Khartoum. Dr. Felkin was the medical man in charge of the Church Missionary Society's expedition to Uganda, and took Mahoom with him to that place. He had returned with the doctor to England, where he had spent some months; hearing that we were going to the Soudan, Dr. Felkin was glad that we should take the boy with us, in order that he might escape the cold of an English winter.

Of these four servants, the only one who did not speak English easily was Shereef. On asking him, at Cairo, if he spoke English, he replied in the negative, but added that he spoke "too much French." His powers, however, in that respect, we found were very limited; but, as most of us spoke a little Arabic, "too much French" was not required.

We brought with us from England two dogs, — a setter and a fox-terrier, "Tartar." The former, when he was put in the dog-box of the train at Cairo, to go to Suez, was in perfect health and spirits; but when we came to take him out at Zagazig, a station about half way between the two places, where we had to change trains, he was dead. They had been poisoning a great many dogs at Cairo; and he must have been poisoned, probably on the morning we left. "Tartar" stood the climate very well: he would run with the camels all day, and sometimes,

when tired, we let him ride on some of the baggage. He would often run on ahead of us, and rest under the shade of some tree; and then, after we had passed him some distance, he would catch us up again. Once or twice we feared we had lost him. He was very fond of chasing gazelles, — which it is unnecessary to add he never caught, — and he sometimes went so far after them that we lost him for hours. Several times he reached the camp long after the last of the caravan had arrived: he had, no doubt, found and followed the scent of the camels.

Among the "Agra's" passengers, we had two officers of the "Blues." They had come out to Egypt hoping to be able to make an expedition into the interior, from either Berbera or Tajourah, ports opposite Aden, but had been obliged to give it up, and had decided on landing at Souakim.

There were also three or four saloon-passengers, bound for India, who had come out in the "Agra" from England, and were not at all delighted, after their long delay in the canal, at the prospect of a further delay through going to Souakim, as it would cause them to be two days longer on their voyage to Kurrachee, to which port they were bound.

We found eight or ten Persian pilgrims, deck-passengers, far more interesting than the Anglo-Indians. They were dressed in parti-coloured robes resembling dressing-gowns, and wore the high felt Persian hat, and, though extremely dirty, were decidedly picturesque.

These unfortunate men had set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca from Bushire, at the head of the Persian Gulf; and some of them had saved up their money for years with this object in view.

After about a month's voyage, they had arrived at Jeddah, the port for Mecca, only to find that they might not land there. There was, at the time of their arrival at Jeddah, cholera in the

Persian Gulf; and as it had not reached the Arabian ports, they were not permitted to land. They consequently had to go on in the steamer; but were not allowed to disembark either at Suez, Algiers, or Lisbon, at all of which ports they touched, and so were carried on to London.

There they had spent three or four weeks; and the British India Company had sent them to the Aquarium, Crystal Palace, and other sights, keeping them at the expense of the company. I should say they had a far more agreeable time of it in London than they would have had at Mecca; and surely, under the circumstances, it would help them as well on their road to paradise as though they had in reality been enabled to say their prayers at the sacred shrine, and to have drunk, at their source, the sacred waters of Zem-Zem.

As the pilgrimage season was over, it was of no use for them to land at Jeddah when the "Agra" called there after leaving Souakim; and consequently they were on their way back to Bushire. Two or three of the original band, better off than the rest, had, we were told, left London for Paris, intending to travel overland; and one had discovered a *houri* in London, with whom he was living in Bayswater.

CHAPTER II.

Arrival at Souakim. — The *Wakeel.* — Thieving Propensities of Egyptian Officials. — Encouragement of Slavery. — Souakim. — Caravan-routes from Souakim. — Ala-ed-Deen Pacha. — The Governor's "Palace." — Bedouin Government Prisoners. — Omnipresence of Greeks. — *Dhurra.* — "Hotel du Soudan." — Curious Manner of dressing the Hair. — An African Hurlingham. — Story of the Seven Virgins. — Departure from Souakim.

AFTER a very uneventful voyage, we reached Souakim about noon of the 11th. The day before, we had had heavy rain; and the day we landed was very cloudy, with occasional heavy showers. We were much surprised at finding wet weather in that part of the world, but afterwards discovered, that, although rain by no means always falls at that time of year, yet it is the season of coast rains.

On our arrival, we called on the *Wakeel*, or government agent, Achmed Effendi; he offered us rooms in the "palace," which we were very glad of, though it was decided to remain for that night on board ship.

Mr. Brewster, the custom-house officer, and Mr. Bewley, were at that time the only English residents in the Soudan. The former had been there some time; but the latter had only just come from Jeddah, where he had lived as partner in a trading-firm that had set up a branch establishment at Souakim. On our return to Souakim in the spring, we found Mr. Brewster had left, and that a native had taken his place, whose pay would perhaps be less, but who would in all probability far more than

make up for that by well lining his own pockets at the expense of the government.

As a rule, Egyptian officials, both high and low, go to the Soudan only in order to rob for themselves as much as possible during the time they are there; and, when they have feathered their own nests as well as their opportunities allow them, they give place to others, whose ambition it is to follow them in the same noble course. These Englishmen were most kind in helping us, and allowed us to leave some things, that we did not require to take with us, in their care.

We saw very little of the *Wakeel* Achmed Effendi, and did not hear at all a good report of him. We were told that he was doing anything but discouraging the slave-trade; that, on the contrary, he took a bribe of two napoleons for every slave that he permitted to leave the port, and that the chief of police took one in addition. Some slaves had been lately seized, and a great to-do made about them: but this was because the hush-money was not forthcoming.

The entrance to the harbour of Souakim is narrow and long, and steamers can only go in by daylight; the entrance is well marked out by beacons, but there are dangerous reefs outside. Our captain had never been to the port before, and did not seem at all to relish taking his vessel in. There is not anchorage in the harbour for more than four or five steamers at a time.

The town, which is built of coral, is rather picturesque-looking, though of a glaring white; and it boasts of one or two minarets. The carving of some of the doors and window-shutters of the houses is most elaborate, and of a different pattern from any I have seen in Cairo. I was told that there was a great deal of the same kind of work at Jeddah.

The town is built on an island, which is united to the mainland by a causeway which Col. Gordon had made when he was

governor-general of the Soudan. Its population is about eight thousand; and it is the chief port of the Soudan, and the outlet of the great bulk of the trade of the White Nile and Khartoum.

The great caravan-route from Souakim is that which, crossing the desert, strikes the Nile at Berber, a distance of two hundred and forty miles; not the road to Cassala, which we followed. Its trade, however, is not increasing, owing to the present low price of gum, its chief export in Europe, and to the restrictions on the slave-trade. Formerly slaves could be purchased with cotton-cloth imported from Manchester; and the slaves were made to carry ivory, ostrich-feathers, etc., to the coast: now this "branch of industry" is done away with, although more merchandise finds its way to Europe by Souakim than by the other great outlet, that *viâ* Berber and Korosko on the Nile.

I made the journey up the Nile, from Cairo to Korosko, during the winter of 1877–78, and from thence across the desert to Abou Hamed, following the banks of the Nile to Berber. The desert journey from Korosko to Abou Hamed is a most severe one: the distance is two hundred and fifty miles of the worst desert imaginable, with nothing for the camels to eat, and only one well, the whole way. The heat, too, during the greater part of the year, is terrific; and the consequent mortality among the camels that make the transit, very great.

In crossing this desert, we saw two regular slave-caravans, consisting of boys and girls, probably from the White Nile or Darfour, travelling in the direction of Korosko. They were all trudging wearily through the heavy sand, while their owners rode on camels which the slaves led. Many doubtless perish on the journey.

Besides the Berber and Korosko route, and that from Berber to Souakim, there is a third road much used by Soudanese tra-

ders. This road follows the banks of the Nile to Wady Halfah: it is chiefly made use of by caravans coming from Darfour and Kordofan, provinces to the west of the White Nile, that produce great quantities of gum. The Nile is struck at a small village called Debbe, about latitude 18° north, whence goods are conveyed by boats as far as Dongola, where the cataracts render farther navigation impossible; and then camels carry them to Wady Halfah at the second cataract. The journey is then resumed in boats to the first cataract, where a railway five miles in length carries the goods below the cataract to other boats waiting for Cairo or Alexandria.

The Egyptian government had just separated the Red-Sea ports Souakim and Massouah, together with the country between them, and Cassala, Sanheit, the town of Cassala itself, Gedariff, the Hamran country, Gallabat and neighbouring provinces, from the rest of the Soudan. Ala-ed-Deen Pacha, who had been for a long time governor of different parts of this country, was made supreme governor; and Ali Reza Pacha, formerly governor of the Red-Sea ports, was deposed. The latter was much hated by the people. Our steamer brought this news to the inhabitants of Souakim; and, Ala-ed-Deen being much liked, the people testified to their joy at this change of government by getting up an impromptu illumination, chiefly by means of little oil-lamps which they hung in front of their houses.

We were very glad to be able to live in the "palace," during our stay at Souakim, instead of being obliged to live in tents, as it rained more or less every day. We were given two rooms on the first floor, in one of which we slept, while the other was assigned to our servants and luggage. Our meals we took either on the verandah, — which was very broad, and looked on to the sea, — or in the large passage, or rather hall, out of which our rooms opened. Although every thing was open, the huge

windows being without glass, but with shutters in its place, and plenty of air stirring, we found Souakim extremely hot and "muggy," and were anxious to leave it with as little delay as possible. The "palace" is built at one end of a large courtyard, one side of which faces the sea, and forms the sea-wall. On the right-hand side a double staircase led to our apartments; and the courtyard was entered from the street by an imposing gateway guarded by soldiers, over which a most formidable-looking lion carved in stone held sway; his tail, which was of extraordinary proportions, stuck out straight. I think the idea of the lion was chiefly ornamental; though, guarding as he did the entrance to the divan, he may have been intended as a symbol of power likewise: he was certainly looked upon as an object of admiration by the inhabitants.

We encountered a very sad sight every time we either entered or left the courtyard. In one corner were huddled together some forty Bedouins, mostly men, with a few women and children. They were all from the neighbourhood of Jeddah, and were government prisoners: they had chains on their legs, and were living in a state of captivity from no fault of their own.

It appeared that a number of Bedouins had crossed over to Souakim with their camels, intending to settle in the neighbourhood, and breed camels. As, however, they quarrelled with the Arabs of the country, Col. Gordon, who was then governor of the Soudan, gave them nine thousand dollars compensation (they having originally obtained permission to settle where they were), and sent them back to their own country. On Col. Gordon giving up the governor-generalship of the Soudan, and leaving the country, a number of them returned, determined to try again what they could do. Ali Reza Pacha, who was then governor of Souakim, thought this an opportunity not to

be lost, for raising a little money. As he could only squeeze two thousand dollars out of them, and this did not satisfy him, he put them in irons.

When we arrived, they had been living a year in the court-yard in this way, and, although government prisoners, were obliged to provide their own food. Their camels had died off in great numbers, and many of the men also had succumbed to the bad treatment they had received. Some of them (guarded by soldiers) were allowed to live with their camels, a few miles out of Souakim, where there was food for their beasts. Achmed Effendi had actually made them lately believe, that, if they would give him forty dollars, it would help towards freeing them. They subscribed this amount between them, which of course went to line the worthy Effendi's pockets, the result to the Bedouins being *nil.* They had no shelter from sun or rain; and some of the poor little children were suffering from fever, which our doctor did what he could to alleviate. We left forty dollars with Mr. Brewster, who promised to expend it during the winter in food, which he kindly offered to distribute among them.

On our return in April, he told us he had been able to buy a great deal of rice and *dhurra* with the money, and that the poor people had been most grateful. We were glad to find the wretched prisoners flown on our return, as the first act of Ala-ed-Deen Pacha, on his arrival in the spring, had been to set them all free, and this he had done before being an hour in the place: he had moreover allowed them to live somewhere to the north of the town if they wished to do so; and many of them availed themselves of this permission, instead of returning to their own country. It is to be hoped, that, in the many changes that have recently taken place in the country, they will not have been oppressed again.

We found a number of Greek shops in the town, and the

place was well supplied with meat. Greeks are to be found everywhere: there is no place too out-of-the-way for them to thrive in, and they make money wherever they go. A great many of them, besides selling bad spirits, beer, and groceries, add considerably to their incomes by lending money to the natives, of course at usurious rates of interest.

No vegetables are grown, and the whole of the surrounding country is desert. The nearest village is Tokar on Khor Baraka, two days' journey away; and there, after the rains, a little *dhurra* is grown. *Dhurra* (the *sorghum vulgare* of Linnæus) is the staple article of food throughout the Soudan: it contains a great deal of starch, and is said to be more nourishing than wheat-flour. The natives cook it in a variety of ways, and add beans or onions, when obtainable, to it. Horses will not thrive unless they get a daily supply of it, and a small quantity is of great use in keeping the riding-camels in good condition. In crossing, too, such a desert as that between Korosko and Abou Hamed, it is necessary to carry some for the baggage-camels as well: it is wonderful on how little food they can do, when pushed to it.

A Greek has set up a small shanty, which he dignifies by the title, "Hotel du Soudan," and advertises hot and cold baths. Fortunately we had no occasion to try its merits, otherwise than by sending some clothes to his wife to be washed: for these she charged us at the rate of two dollars per dozen, counting a pair of socks as two articles; so that what they lacked in custom, they evidently tried to make up in their prices, when, as they say in America, "a stranger happened to come along."

Beyond the island on which the town is built, Souakim continues for some distance in suburbs, containing a somewhat extensive if not very inviting bazaar.

The camel-drivers, who mostly belong to the Hadendowa tribe, live on the mainland. Most of them wear long hair standing up straight on the crown of the head, and of a fine but woolly texture, while that at the back of the head generally reaches to the shoulders, and is sometimes worn in plaits: when properly dressed, the whole is covered with fat, and a wooden skewer, by way of comb, stuck in it. We saw one or two men with their heads covered with fat that had been mixed with grated sandalwood, and presented a red-ochre appearance: these, we were informed, were about to enter the marriage-state.

The hair is, with all Arabs, a source of pride; and the men of various tribes may frequently be distinguished by little differences in their mode of dressing it.

No traveller in these parts can fail to be struck by the great similarity in physique, and general appearance, of many of the wandering tribes of Arabs, to the ancient Egyptians as depicted on the walls of their temples and tombs. The mode of wearing the hair is identical; the curious little wooden pillows they use for their heads when sleeping are exactly of the same form and make as those which may be seen in museums containing ancient Egyptian curiosities; as, too, are also the chairs that they use. A very intelligent Greek, whom we afterwards met in Cassala, and who had given some attention to the study of the language spoken by the Hadendowa Arabs in the neighbouring country, and had, moreover, some knowledge of hieroglyphics, told us that there was often a striking similarity in many of their words.

My brother Arthur in 1877 made the journey from Souakim to Cassala; meeting the rest of the party, who had taken the Nile route, in the interior. He had with him a Hadendowa Arab, who had originally started as guide to the caravan from

Souakim to Cassala; and this Arab accompanied him all the way to Cairo. Throughout this journey, his hair was a constant source of anxiety to him. He could not dress it himself, and, on leaving Cassala, was soon beyond the region of his own tribe. His delight was unbounded when he met a woman of his own people on the Atbara River, who, on being rewarded for her pains by the promise of an empty beer-bottle, undertook to dress his hair, — a process that occupied a good two hours. He reclined, during the process, with his head in the lady's lap; and the crowning joy of all was anointing the plaited tresses with the musky fat of the crocodile, the horrible odour of which clung to him for days, to *his* great satisfaction, but to the great discomfort of our olfactory nerves.

The largest building in Souakim is a storehouse and *caravanserai* in one, built on the mainland. It was erected by a native, for the merchants to leave their goods in while waiting for transport, and cost eighty thousand dollars. It was built almost entirely by slave-labour, otherwise it would have cost fully a third more. The builder and owner was formerly a government employé, at a hundred and fifty piastres (or about thirty-one shillings) a month!

During our stay at Souakim, we were, of course, very busy arranging and re-arranging our luggage. Sir Edward Malet, H. B. M.'s consul-general in Egypt, had very kindly telegraphed from Cairo to have camels ready for us. His telegram, I have no doubt, hastened matters; but there is always considerable delay in making a start.

Sheik Attman Galani, the sheik of the camels that traverse the Cassala road, — a very fine-looking Arab, with a great idea of driving a bargain, — paid us several visits before we finally arranged matters.

We went out fishing once or twice, but did not catch much,

our chief capture being a ground-shark weighing eleven pounds. The amount and variety of fish in these waters are something extraordinary, and many of them are of the most gorgeous colours; but, to meet with much success, it is necessary to go some little distance outside the harbour, where we found the water often unpleasantly rough when anchored and fishing from a small boat; and we were, moreover, so busy making preparations for our departure, that we had no time for lengthy excursions.

One afternoon some of the Greeks of the place, together with Mr. Bewley, went off to a sandy island to shoot sand-grouse that some Arab boys had caught. It was quite Hurlingham in Africa; but the birds were thrown up in the air, instead of being released from traps, and very difficult shots they proved.

The derivation of the word Souakim, or Souakin (for it is spelled indifferently both ways), is a curious one. In the language of the country, it is called Sowagin (*Anglicé*, "together with the *gin*, or fairy"). The story runs, that seven virgins inhabited an island in the Red Sea, where there were no men, or people of any kind except themselves. Some fishermen one day visited the island, and found the women *enceinte*. Their offspring colonised the mainland, and founded Souakim; and the present inhabitants are descended from them. The ladies declared that genii were the fathers of their children.

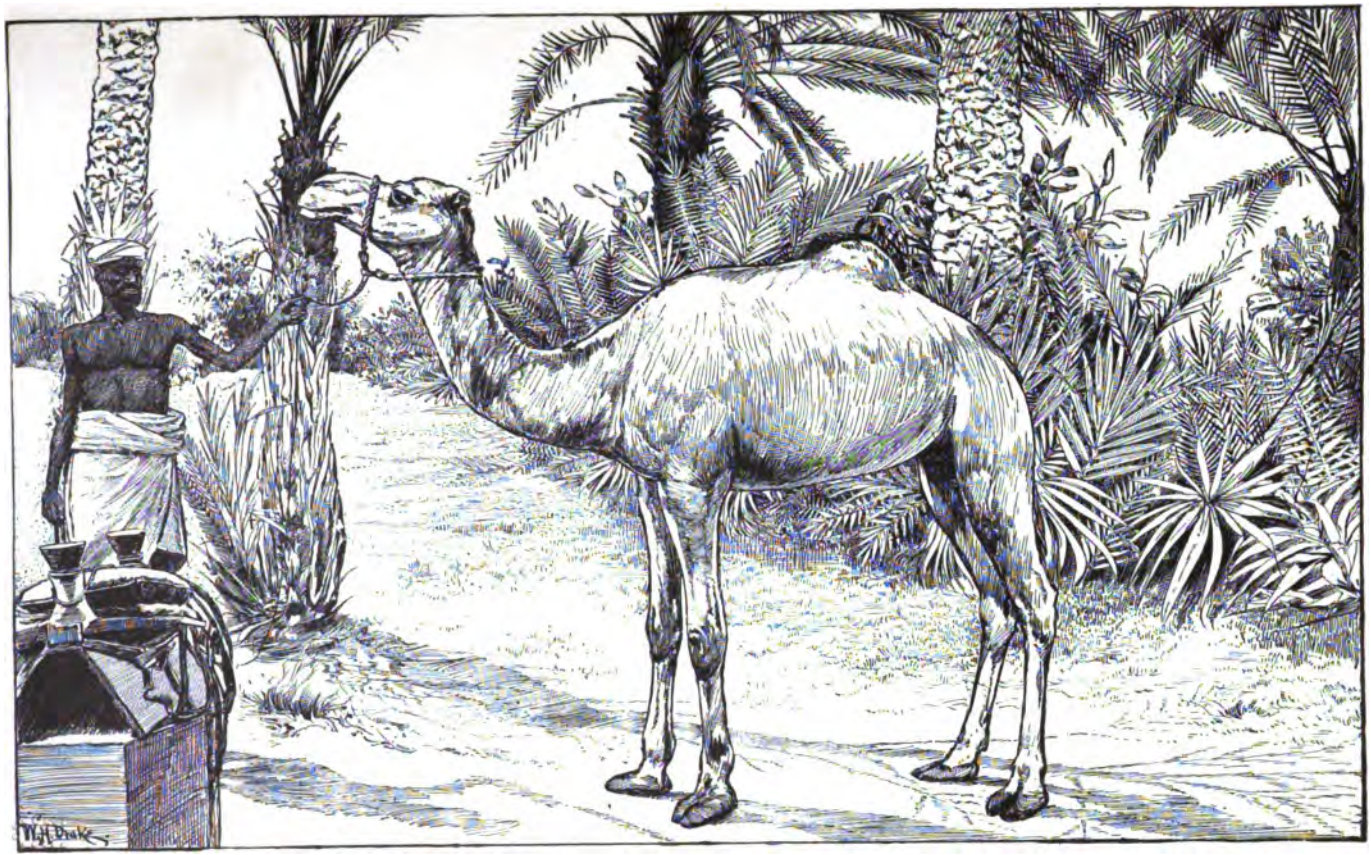
We were very glad to turn our backs on Souakim, and make a start for the interior, which we did on Dec. 15, about two o'clock in the afternoon. We left behind the two officers of the "Blues," who had travelled with us from Suez: they were busy buying camels, always a very slow and troublesome undertaking. They got off, however, soon after we did, and by following the bed of Khor Baraka, and the Anseba, reached Keren. From thence they made their way to Furfur, on the

borders of the Dembelas country (where we had been the previous winter), but were rather disappointed with the sport they obtained. One of them succeeded in penetrating to some of the Dembelas villages, — a feat that had only been previously accomplished by the Marquis Antinori, the Italian traveller, the country being almost *terra incognita:* he reported it to be very hilly, and impassable for camels, but found the people friendly, possessing better houses than their neighbours who were under Egyptian government, and he observed more appearance of cultivation. He saw very little game.

Most of our provisions we had brought from England, which we found more economical than getting them in Cairo. Our outfit had been chiefly obtained from Silver in Cornhill, and nearly every thing we got from him proved satisfactory.

We paid five dollars and a half each for our camels to Cassala, a distance of about two hundred and eighty miles. Our *personal* property in beasts of burden, which was destined afterwards to increase to considerable proportions, commenced from this date. My brother Arthur bought a very good *hygeen*, or riding-camel, at the upset price of a hundred dollars. He had formerly belonged to Ala-ed-Deen Pacha, and, though slow, was very easy in gait, a great desideratum. His name was "Bellus;" though what "Bellus" means, I am sure I don't know. My other brother also bought a *hygeen* from an Arab, who rode after us with it, when we had gone an hour from the town; for this animal he gave forty dollars, and forthwith christened him "Snodgrass." These camels brought them both back eventually to the coast, but they were about done for when they arrived.

Colvin and Aylmer each bought a horse, the only specimens of the equine race of which Souakim could boast; they were wiry little animals, and came from the Hamran country. Al-



"BELLAS."

though they carried them to Cassala, they never recovered from the hardships of the long desert-journey, and one of them died soon after its arrival there.

Most people, after they have once become used to them, find camels far less fatiguing to ride than horses, for long desert-journeys; and they are certainly much more suitable to the country.

A most uncomfortable start we made from Souakim: the rain, which we had been daily favoured with, came down in torrents soon after our departure. Although in the winter months rain is unknown in the interior, at the time we landed in Africa it was the season of coast-rains; and rain might be daily expected until we could put some miles between us and the sea.

CHAPTER III.

The First Halt. — The Rainy Season. — The Camel-sheik comes for *Bakshees*h. — Three Caravan-routes to Cassala. — Disputes with the Camel-drivers. — Gazelles. — Management of Camels. — Halt at Siterabb. — A Piteous Tale.

In a regular African deluge, and wet to the skin, we pitched the tents. Some of the provisions became saturated with rain, which got, too, into our portmanteaus. The drivers were all quarrelling about their loads, and our halt for the night was made only an hour and a half's march out of the town. The camel-drivers always try to accomplish this, as they say it enables them to run back if they have forgotten any thing: it means, of course, too, a late start on the following day.

The Egyptian tents we had had made in Cairo were decidedly fine-weather tents, and, although admirably adapted to a dry climate, were not so agreeable for a wet one. Tents soon spoil if often packed up wet, as they get mildewed, and rot. We consoled ourselves with the reflection that the bad weather could not last long. The rain stopped before we went to bed, but came down faster than ever in the night; and we had to jump out of bed to rescue bags and clothes, and set to work to dig trenches round our tents to drain the rain off, — a precaution that had been neglected before going to bed.

The natives were delighted with the rain; for, although it was the season when they expected it, it often happens at Souakim that there is none, or next to none at all, during the whole year.

The desert was carpeted with the most beautiful grass of a very vivid green; the dwarf-mimosa bushes, of which there were plenty, were bursting into leaf; and the plain was covered with cattle, goats, and sheep, while numbers of camels wandered from bush to bush, or grazed on the fresh grass, a rare treat to all animals in these regions.

The cows in these parts often prove very obstinate when they are wanted to keep quiet in order to be milked. The natives often resort to the expedient of holding a calf-skin, which the cow to be milked has previously smelt, at some little distance from her nose; then she will keep quiet, and submit to the process of milking, without any further trouble.

The next day, although we rose at dawn, it was nearly noon before our camels were loaded, and a fresh start made; more rain falling during the process of packing. The camel-sheik, intent on *baksheesh*, arrived while we were at breakfast: we gave him a small present, and promised him the same on our return, if our camels, and the men in charge of them, proved satisfactory.

There are three roads between Souakim and Cassala, all more or less traversed by caravans. The one we took kept close to the telegraph-wires the whole way, and is the shortest. A second follows, for the greater part of the way, Khor Baraka,[1] and, although considerably longer, is probably more agreeable, as there is more shade and water by this route. Khor Baraka runs into the sea a little to the south of Souakim, near Tokar.

The third road follows, almost all the way, a mountain range, a little to the west of our route. The Arabs said there was more water on that road than on the one we took; but it is rather longer, and very stony, which is trying to the camels

[1] *Khor* signifies a stream or river that only flows during the rainy season, and is quite dried up during the dry. *Bahr* means a flowing river that never dries up.

with their spongy feet, especially when they are laden. On our route, there was scarcely any grass the whole way; and what there was, was of course, at the season of the year in which we travelled, completely burnt up; it was mostly very fine in texture, and as brittle as spun-glass. The grass that had sprung up in consequence of the rain lasted only for twenty or thirty miles after leaving the town, by which time we got out of the rainy zone.

The greater part of the country was sparsely covered with mimosa-bushes, mostly leafless during the dry season, and affording no shade. In some places there were bushes covered with leaves of a most brilliant green. The branches, and especially the roots, of this shrub (*Capparis sodata*), are much prized by the Arabs as tooth-brushes: they are very fibrous, but I doubt if they have any special cleansing properties.

The teeth of these dark-skinned people are nearly always very white: this is, no doubt, partly due to their very simple diet, and also it is certain that the strong contrast afforded by their dark skins makes them appear whiter than they are in reality.

We commenced to have trouble with our camel-drivers on the second day's journey from Souakim. The caravan had been allowed to go on ahead, as we had stopped behind with the camel-sheik, trying to bargain for another *hygeen*, but without coming to terms; and, on overtaking it, we found the camels were off feeding, and their loads on the ground. We were anxious to get out of the rains as quickly as possible, and had given orders that they were to make a late march. Suleiman and the other servants had done all in their power to make them continue their journey; but the camel-drivers had insisted on stopping at four o'clock, after a march of less than five hours. On being pressed to go on, they had threatened Sulei-

man with their spears, which had been taken away from them, and tied together in a bundle.

It was not only important that we should get out of the rains as quickly as possible, but more so that we should let the men see, at the very outset of our journey, that we were the masters, not they, and that they were to do as they were told. Accordingly we insisted on their loading up again, which they did very quickly; and just at dusk we resumed our march, not halting until 9.15.

On our right was a high range of mountains, through which led the road to Berber; while on our left a level, sandy plain, covered with green grass and low scrub, stretched to the sea.

We experienced great difficulty in pitching our tents in the dark, as most of the men were new to the work; and as we were only just commencing our expedition, no one knew where any thing was, nor what was required of him. Every thing was wet, and it was very difficult to make charcoal burn; so that it was 12.30 before we had dined and could go to bed.

We had seen a few gazelle (*Gazella Arabica*), and a herd of ariel (*Gazella Dama*), but all very shy. Each year they become less numerous on the caravan-routes; and my brother Arthur, the only one of the party who had made the journey before, said they were far less common than when he passed over the same road four years before.

The following day we got an eight-hours' march out of our camels, and without any great difficulty with the drivers: they had begun to know their loads, and the inevitable squabbling that takes place at starting was nearly over.

An eight-hours' march for the caravan is as much as can be accomplished with comfort. As soon as the loads are taken off at night, the camels are turned out to feed; at dusk, unless there is a moon, they must be collected in camp again, to be

driven out to feed at break of day. To accomplish more in the day than eight hours, means getting up at a more than abnormally early hour, and continually hustling the camel-drivers to bring in their camels; or, it means pitching your tents in darkness, and getting dinner very late. In eight hours the caravan will accomplish twenty miles, and the same distance can be got over on fair *hygeens* in about four or five. The start should be made in advance of the baggage-camels, so as to allow plenty of time for shooting, and for the midday halt.

Besides the discomfort to the traveller if camels are constantly pressed to do more than eight hours, they do not get sufficient time to feed; as, when on the march, all they can get, of course, is a mouthful of food snatched now and then as they are travelling, and they *ought* to have time given them to feed morning and evening.

The country gradually became less green, as we augmented the distance between us and the sea; heavy clouds hung about, the air was close and sultry, and we had some heavy showers. We wound through some rocky hillocks before pitching our tents, and finally encamped in the sandy bed of a *khor*, at a place called Siterabb, near the first water out from Souakim, and where there were a few huts belonging to the telegraph-people.

The following morning, a very wretched-looking old woman came to us with a piteous tale of how she had been robbed of her all, — a few dollars she had saved, — by the telegraph-people. I gave her a dollar, and her joy was unbounded: she insisted not only on kissing my hand, but my boots; and I began to feel that there was such a thing as excess of gratitude, — at any rate, that it could be expressed in too demonstrative a manner.

CHAPTER IV.

Journey continued. — Buck Gazelie shot. — More Trouble with the Camel-drivers. — A rose-breasted Shrike. — Sand-storm at Ellegua. — Jules taken ill. — Death in Camp. — Takroori Woman abandoned by her People. — We divide the Camp. — Mishaps of those left behind. — Christmas Day at Wandi. — "Molly."

THE country, as we travelled on, was monotonous, but not unpicturesque, owing to the hills to our north and south, and the glorious tints caused by the setting sun in a tropical climate.

First, we traversed a sandy stretch with no bushes growing on it, only tufts of dried grass here and there; then, a patch of stony ground, covered with low mimosa-bushes without leaves, but furnished with horrible thorns; followed by a similar waste, with the addition of very occasional *nebbuk*-bushes (*Rhammus lotus*.) This tree bears a fruit very much resembling minute apples in appearance, about the size of a hazel-nut: it is, however, not very palatable, being dry. Juicy fruit is, perhaps, too much to expect in such a burnt-up land.

In some parts of the country, *nebbuk*-bushes are extremely common: they are covered with very formidable thorns, as are most of the bushes and trees of these regions; the leaves are always green, and, when growing thickly together, form an all but impenetrable jungle. The fruit is relished by the Arabs, as well as by guinea-fowl, monkeys, and many other animals.

We saw very little game, and what we did see was very shy, and rendered additionally difficult of approach, from the very

open nature of the ground, which made stalking any thing but an easy process. Aylmer was the first to draw blood, having shot a buck gazelle the day before.

The next day we had some further trouble with our camel-drivers. We had started ahead of the caravan, and shot a couple of gazelles, when one of our native servants suddenly appeared, to tell us that three of the camels were lost. This was all nonsense in reality, and only a ruse in order to give the camels more time to feed, and to let the men dawdle about. We turned back; and, when we met a number of the laden camels that had just started, we unloaded some, and over-loaded others, so that we got two empty ones; with these we returned to our late camp, and loaded them with the baggage that was left, and which belonged to the camels supposed to be lost. We started them after the others as soon as possible; but it delayed us very much, and we only accomplished a six-hours' march. The lost camels were soon found, and the baggage re-arranged.

We passed some huts in the afternoon, near to which water could be obtained, although two or three miles off the road, at a place called Sankereet: accordingly a camel was left behind to bring a supply, and we travelled on some distance farther, before halting for the night.

Birds of any kind were very scarce; but Lort Phillips shot a rose-breasted shrike, a kind of butcher-bird I had never met with before.

Dec. 20 was a blazing hot day, and the last on which we had any rain, and that only a slight shower early in the morning. We marched rather over ten hours to make up for lost time, journeying along a plain from twelve to fifteen miles wide, between the ranges of hills. *Khors* became rather more numerous, and were wider, showing that we were nearing a

country where there was a greater rainfall: otherwise it wore much the same aspect, except for occasional *dhoum*-palms (*Cucifera Thebaica*), a new feature in the landscape.

A long halt being made in the middle of the day, darkness overtook us; and, losing what there was in the way of a path, we began to think the night would be spent in the open without any dinner. Our servants lighted great fires to guide us to the tents, and fired shots, so that at last camp was reached, but very late, as we had gone a considerable distance out of our way, the direct road having left the telegraph-poles some distance on its right. As a rule, the camel-path and the wire kept close together.

In the night a tremendous wind got up; and all hands were busy driving in extra tent-pegs, and tightening the ropes. The sand blew about in all directions, and half smothered us. Sleep was impossible, and I never spent a more disagreeable night. The name of this enchanting spot was Ellegua.

The following morning Jules complained of a bad attack of vomiting and diarrhœa. Our men declared that they must stop until noon to water and feed their camels, so that we did not feel that we had gained much by the long march of the previous day. The water was three miles away, in a gorge in the mountain. In order to hurry their movements, two or three of us faced the blinding storm, and went with them to the water; and, what with the heat and sand, it was any thing but a pleasant task. Had this operation, however, not been superintended, we should have been at Ellegua all day: as it was, we managed to get eight miles farther on our way, and pitched our tents near Khor Langeb.

The sand-storm continued, and we had the greatest difficulty in finding a spot where the ground was sufficiently firm to

admit of our pitching the tents: the tempest, if possible, increased during the night.

Except that it was not so hot, it reminded me of my experience once in travelling by rail from Suez to Cairo. Then a violent *rhamseen* wind got up after we had started; and, although all the windows were kept closed, the sand on the floor was over a quarter of an inch deep. Some of the carriages ran off the rails, owing to the driving sand; and in some places men had to go on ahead to sweep it off the rails, before it was possible to proceed. The heat, too, was terrific, the thermometer in the wind marking 113° F. The sun was, of course, obscured by the sand which rattled against the carriage-windows like hail. It is no joke to be living in tents in such a tempest, and it must be undergone to be thoroughly understood and appreciated.

There were a great many *dhoum*-palms near our encampment: previously we had only found them in ones and twos. There were, too, plenty of tamarisk-trees, which were here met with for the first time, and which we were glad to see, as they are a very favourite food of the camel.

We had to remain where we were the next day, as Jules was not well enough to go on. George, too, was unwell, and lay down all day in the tent; and Suleiman, who was never ill, complained that "his stomach bite him plenty." The storm rather increased than decreased, as the day wore on; and we had considerable difficulty in securing the tents. To add to the general cheerfulness, a death took place in camp.

A day or two previously a small band of Takroori pilgrims, returning from Mecca, had attached themselves to our caravan. The Takrooris came originally from Darfour. They have now, however, settled in the neighbourhood of Gallabat, on the Abyssinian frontier; and the Egyptian Government has given them

some land on a number of years' lease, where they cultivate *dhurra.*

The day before, the Takroori band had been joined by two more men of their tribe, whom we had overtaken on the road. We had not noticed them, and knew nothing of their presence, until Suleiman came to tell us about them, as one was ill. The doctor went to see what he could do for him, and found him lying on the ground, smothered in sand, and evidently *in extremis.* We administered brandy, and did what we could; but he only lasted an hour. The man who was with him, and who said he was his brother, borrowed a spade from us, and buried him there and then. He had died, literally, of starvation and fatigue.

It appeared that these people had walked all the way from Gallabat to the coast, a distance of some hundreds of miles. On their return from Mecca, owing to cholera at Jeddah, and in order to escape quarantine at Souakim, they had landed on the African coast, about a hundred miles south of that port. They were entirely without funds, and had lived on what they could beg from the Arabs, who are often kind to passing strangers. Such deaths in the desert are doubtless of frequent occurrence, and are bound to be so while these long pilgrimages are undertaken, as they often are, by old men and women almost totally unprovided with means, and frequently possessing nothing but the strong wish to see Mecca, and die, which seems to bear them up, and help them through apparently insurmountable difficulties. The dead man's brother we looked after until our arrival in Cassala, where he left us, and continued his journey south to his home. This event brought to light a still more shocking occurrence that had taken place a few days previously.

Among the Takrooris who had joined us soon after leaving

the coast, were two women, one of whom was rather lame. As she could not well trudge along with the rest of the party, they simply left her behind to die in the desert; although her husband was with her, it appeared that he was perfectly satisfied to do so. Unfortunately we knew nothing of it, until so long after she had been left behind, that it was impossible and quite useless to send after her. She could quite well have ridden on one of our camels; but such is the callousness to suffering, and total disregard of life, among these people, that no one of the drivers had thought of asking her to do so.

A similar event took place when we were crossing the Great Nubian Desert from Korosko, four years before: then it was one of the camel-drivers that had been left behind to die. We knew nothing of it for several days after; and, when we expressed our horror at what had happened, they considered they had behaved in a really generous manner by leaving him a small quantity of water and *dhurra*-flour.

The sand-storm continued the following day, and Jules was too ill to move. We decided on leaving him behind, as we could not remain any longer at a place where there was no water, and scarcely any food for the camels; for, though fond of tamarisk-bushes, they would not live exclusively upon them. Lort Phillips and the doctor remained behind with the invalid.

After five and a half hours' march through a decidedly less sandy country, we arrived at a *khor* called Wandi; where there was more food for the camels than at the last place, and, moreover, wells of tolerably good water. It was only the second watering-place on our *direct* route we had come across; and there were a few tents there, and Arabs with sheep and goats.

The next day we spent in camp, hoping that the rest of the party would overtake us. There being no signs of them, on

the following day, which was Christmas Day, I started off by myself, on my camel, to see how they were getting on; and, in an hour's time, I found them under a tree.

They had left the camp the previous afternoon late, so as to avoid the heat of the sun. Their camel-men had deserted them, and they had lost their way: so they slept out under a tree, which was no hardship, as the nights were warm, and there was no dew. On the morning that I encountered them, they had made a farther march of two hours.

When we had left them at Khor Langeb, I had reminded the doctor to see that he had plenty of medicine with him; as I told him, that, although the Arabs informed us water was near at hand, I knew well from former experience that they were not to be relied on to speak the truth, and that we were bound to push on to water, even if it were two days' journey distant. He had assured me that he had kept plenty with him when we parted; and yet, thirty-six hours after our departure, all the medicine was finished. Lort Phillips had accidentally discovered the presence of dysentery, and told the doctor of it; when he found that he not only had no medicine to check it, but had none of any kind left.

I remained with Lort Phillips while the doctor went to the camp for medicine: it was, however, eighteen hours after the discovery that the disease had turned to dysentery, before poor Jules had any medicine whatever.

In the cool of the afternoon we went on to Wandi, where we spent the rest of anything but a "merry Christmas."

Mahoom's master had presented him, before leaving England, with a plum-pudding, and requested us to let the boy know when it was Christmas Day, in order that he might regale himself upon it. We did so; and he devoured it with evident satisfaction, doubtless considering the consumption of plum-

pudding on that day to be one of the religious ceremonies of the British nation, to which he was exceedingly anxious to conform. He was a perfect specimen of the *genus* heathen, trained on the lines of Exeter Hall. He had brought with him, all the way from Edinburgh, a magnificent Christmas card, a veritable *chef-d'œuvre* of De la Rue's. Intent on presenting my brother with this work of art, he entered his tent about midnight on Christmas night, waking him out of a sound sleep. I fear his kind intention was not appreciated; as, being only half awake, my brother was not able to take in what it all meant, and greeted him with language that would be any thing but approved of by Exeter Hall. Poor Mahoom retired very much crestfallen; but, the *amende honorable* being made the next day, he was happy again. Mahoom was very much given to collecting wild-flowers; and wearing a huge straw hat *minus* part of the brim, and clad in what we imagined to be a complete suit of his late mistress's underclothing, which he wore with a cord round his waist, he presented a well-dressed and decidedly original appearance, as he wandered about intent on his botanical pursuits. In consequence of the eccentricity of his attire, he received the *soubriquet* of "Molly."

CHAPTER V.

We divide the Camp. — Part start for Cassala. — The Rest remain at Wandi. — Continued Illness of Jules. — *Dhurra* runs short. — Departure from Wandi. — Khor Belag. — News of the First Party. — A Deserted Village. — Omri. — The Belgian Doctor. — Halt at Khor Rassay. — Pharaoh's Lean Kine. — Desolate Tract of Country. — Scorpions.

We decided on splitting camps; one-half of the party, with the bulk of the luggage, to go on to Cassala, so as to arrange, as far as possible, for another start by the time the rest arrived. On the 27th they commenced their journey; leaving Lort Phillips, my brother William, and myself behind, with the doctor of course, and Jules. It was very dull waiting at Wandi: the heat was very great, and the flies most troublesome. There was no game, with the exception of a chance gazelle and a few sand-grouse, which used to come for water morning and evening, when we shot a few for food. They are not very good eating, being dry and tasteless, and are grouse only in name as far as the *cuisine* is concerned, though true grouse from a naturalist's point of view.

We were at our wits' end to know what to do: sometimes Jules appeared to be getting better, and then again he seemed weaker. We thought at one time of sending him back to Souakim with George and the doctor, but eventually concluded to take him on to Cassala. We were about half way between the two places; and one objection to sending him back to England was the voyage home, as he suffered fearfully from sea-sickness.

We felt a move would have to be made soon, as the *dhurra* was getting finished; the camel-drivers, who supply their own, had exhausted their supply, and we had to give them ours. The party that had preceded us to Cassala had promised to send us some as soon as they could procure any; but we knew it was not at all improbable that they would not be able to do so until they reached that town themselves. A breakdown had occurred in about the worst place where such a thing could have happened. Those that had gone on ahead had decidedly the best of it; for although they had left us the cook, and were obliged to do their own cooking, they were spared all anxiety as to what was to be done with Jules.

At last, finding that we could not remain any longer where we were, and by the advice of the doctor, who considered him rather better, and thought that it was important to get him to a place where such things as milk and eggs were obtainable, the order was given to continue our journey; and we left Wandi on the 31st.

We managed to purchase an *angareb* from an Arab. An *angareb* is a native bedstead, made of wood with strips of raw-hide stretched tightly across it. This we fastened to a camel, at right angles to the animal's back, and supported on two boxes: Jules' bed was placed on it, so that he could lie at full length; and, as a protection against the sun, some men we had hired at Souakim made a matting cover stretched on sticks, and fastened it to the *angareb;* doors were made in it, which could be opened or shut at will. In this way he rode as easily as a sick man could well ride over such a country. We tried hard to get him and the doctor off very early in the morning; but the camels had been out feeding all night, and took a great deal of catching.

We made a six and a half hours' march, and encamped in a

khor called Belag. Jules was not as much exhausted after the journey as we expected to find him: the dysentery had nearly stopped; but he was, of course, still very weak from its effects.

The country was most uninteresting and dreary, very sandy, with small hillocks covered with friable rock. We scarcely saw a living thing all day. The next day, the first of the new year, was very cool, with a high wind blowing, but no dust, a most agreeable change after the heat we had lately been experiencing. The country, too, although any thing but beautiful, was rather less monotonous than most of that we had lately traversed. The road wound in and out between low hills, so that one could not look far ahead. This, when travelling in an unpicturesque country, is far more agreeable than journeying over a level plain where you can see miles and miles before you; there is always the excitement of a turn in the road, and the traveller can indulge in wonder as to what fresh object that turn may show him, in even the tamest landscape.

The post arrived from the other party, in the shape of a note fastened to a telegraph-pole, telling us where they had encamped the previous night, and that they were all well, which we were glad to hear, particularly as Colvin had been rather indisposed when he started.

We saw a few gazelles, and shot three, to the great delight of our men, who had not been troubled with a plethora of food for some time.

We halted while in the middle of the day at a place called Hadaiweb, where there was a palm-grove, and water; a most agreeable change after the country we had lately passed through. A short distance above the palm-grove, and on a slight eminence, we came upon a deserted village, or rather cluster of huts, which had evidently been inhabited at no distant date.

The last occupants had left behind them cooking-pots, very neatly made mats, and chairs. These chairs were exactly like many of those made by the ancient Egyptians, to be seen in the Boulac Museum in Cairo, and which I have already mentioned. Some of the huts had holes in the ground, where the women burn perfumes, over which they crouch in order to scent their bodies.

We soon came to *nebbuk*-bushes, for the first time in any number; and also came across the aloe, besides passing several *khors* bordered with *dhoum*-palms. There were scarcely any birds: doves, which usually abound everywhere, were conspicuous only by their absence.

We made a march of nine and a half hours, and pitched our tents in a *khor* called Omri. There was a considerable difference in the temperature of the nights about this time: instead of the mercury falling no farther than 68° to 70°, it varied from 50° to 55°, which was far from disagreeable after the hot days.

On Jan. 2, while on the march, we met a Belgian doctor, returning to the coast. He had been shooting with a gentleman whom he had left in the neighbourhood of Cassala, and had under his care a professional *chasseur* who was suffering from sunstroke, and was very anxious to return to his native "happy hunting-grounds" in Belgium. He gave us a dreadful account of the heat and mosquitoes at Cassala, and the unhealthiness of the place; but, as I had once spent a fortnight there, I was not alarmed by his report.

Khors increased daily in number. We crossed one very wide one called Aredey: it must have been fully two hundred yards in breadth, with a thick belt of *dhoums* on either bank. As there was water a little distance from where we passed over, a camel was left behind to bring some on. We encountered a jackal, that the Arabs declared every night set up an unearthly

howling at the grave of a man lately dead, who had murdered a number of his fellow-creatures.

After an eight and a half hours' march, we spent the night near a *khor*, where there were more birds than we had yet met with, and we saw green paroquets for the first time. They flew about from one *dhoum*-palm to another, uttering the most discordant cry. They are the same species so common in India.

The following day we contented ourselves with a six and a half hours' march, halting near Khor Rassay, a more than usually wide river-bed, with a perfect forest of *dhoum*-palms, and wells forty feet deep, dry in the sand. Here were some huts, a few soldiers, and the Arabs about had plenty of goats; so we revelled in fresh milk, a great boon for Jules. We observed a few cattle much resembling Pharaoh's lean kine, and, thinking to give our men a treat, sent Suleiman to bargain with their owners with a view to the purchase of one of them. He very soon returned, saying that "the black people no sell hen bulls, only men bulls, this time of year." Although of a decidedly dusky hue himself, he invariably evinced a supreme contempt for what he was fond of designating as "black people."

A camel with *dhurra* met us here; the driver bringing a note from my brother, to say he had paid five dollars for the camel's hire, and two and a half for the *dhurra*, — very good pay; but the Arabs are sharp enough in finding out when you must have things, and one sometimes has to pay accordingly. The camel had come from Fillík, the only village on the road, and about forty miles from Cassala.

The day's work had been more than usually uninteresting. We crossed several *khors*, the country between being as desolate as it is possible to imagine. The mountains we had left, and saw no more till we came in sight of the great mountain at the foot of which lies Cassala, and found ourselves in a wide

and stony plain, with a few stunted mimosa-bushes growing here and there. The heat, too, was very great, and we saw no game. The next two days' journeys, however, were even more trying. We had thought the country could not become uglier or more monotonous to traverse; but we soon found that it could, — a perfectly level stretch of country to our right, terminating in the horizon to our left, and in front of us a range of hillocks, at a distance of some ten or twelve miles.

We occasionally crossed a *khor* bordered with a few bushes and sickly-looking *dhoum*-palms; the heat being intense, with a total absence of shade. For miles we passed over country without a bush, and covered with a perpetual mirage; then we would come to a strip on which grew a few dwarf mimosa bushes. In parts the desert was covered with loose stones: as we neared Cassala, however, this gave place to a fine loamy soil, which, no doubt, with rain would be very fertile. Once we passed through what had been, after the rains, a *dhurra*-field. Of animal life, we came across a few guinea-fowl, and saw a fine buck ariel, the first of the species we had seen since passing the herd near Souakim.

While the camels were being laden, we observed a kind of butcher-bird perch itself on the back of one of the camels, and make three darts, one after the other, for something hidden between the bags with which the animal was laden; at its third dart, the bird fished up a scorpion, with which it flew off in great satisfaction, to devour it at its leisure. Although we often came across scorpions, we were fortunate in never being bitten by any of them ourselves. Some of our servants, however, who slept on the ground, were not so lucky; and Ali the cook was so badly bitten by one that the place did not heal for weeks. On the Cassala road we found a villanously ugly lizard, that lived in dead wood, and which the natives declared to be poisonous.

CHAPTER VI.

Arrival at Fillik. — The Gash. — Abundance of Game. — Cassala reached. — Encampment in the Dry Bed of the Gash. — Caravans on the Cassala Road. — The Governor of Cassala. — Servants sent from Sanheit. — Death of Jules.

On the 5th we arrived at Fillik, after two very long marches. This place is quite a town, or rather a collection of hamlets, built in a treeless, dusty, waterless plain: all the water required by the inhabitants has to be fetched from wells sunk in a *khor* some distance off, and below Fillik. The town, or village, is composed of conical-roofed huts, thatched with *dhurra*-stalks. Being very straggling, it covers a great deal of ground, and is the permanent headquarters of the Hadendowa tribe: the families of many of our camel-drivers lived there.

In the distance, a long way off, we saw a range of low mountains; the Cassala mountain was ahead, and just in sight; to our left, and all around us, was a great dismal plain, perfectly flat and without any vegetation. We halted inside the telegraph compound. Soon after our arrival a telegram came from the governor of Cassala, ordering the authorities to send five soldiers to Wandi to our assistance.

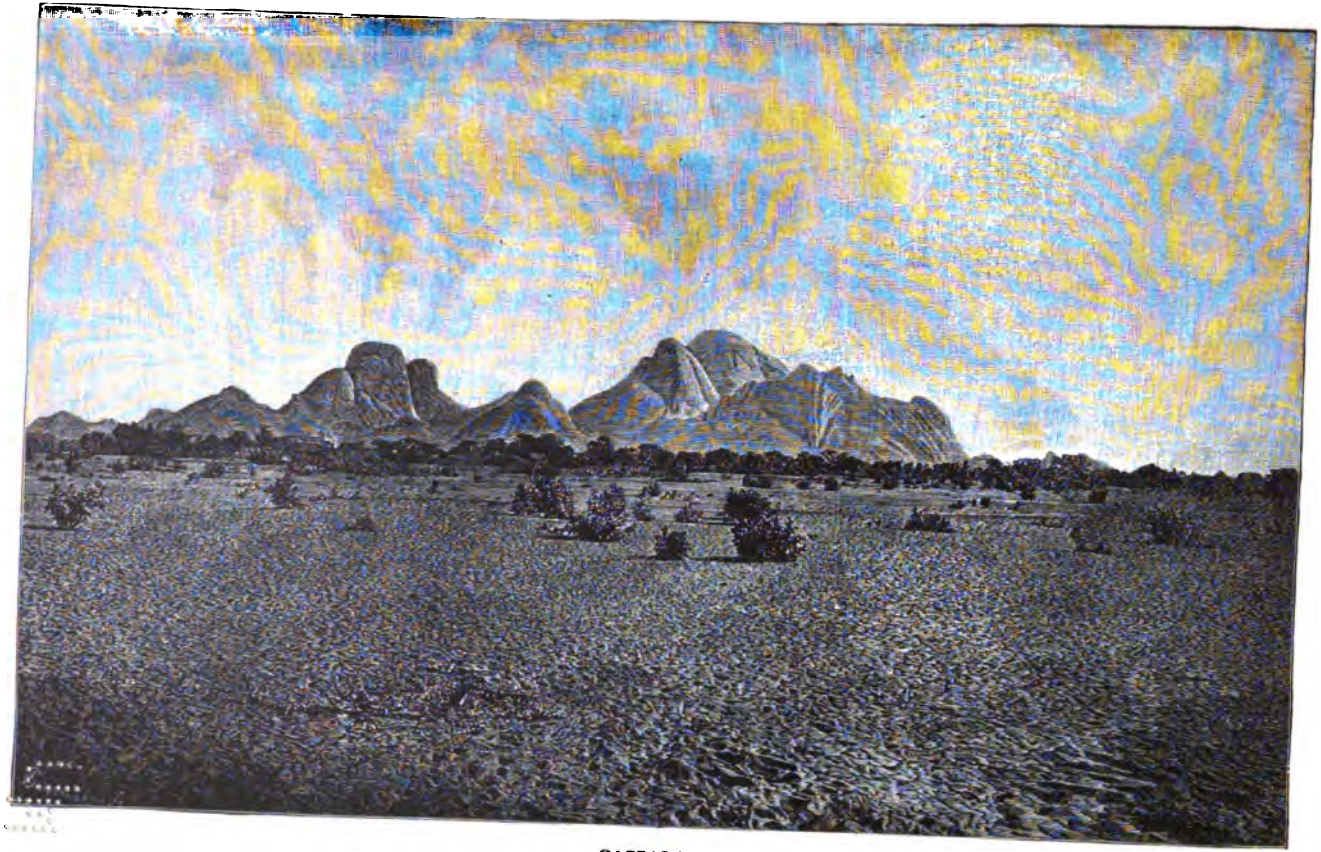
The following day, as soon as we had seen the caravan off, we started to look for the Gash, the important *khor* on which Cassala is situated, and which, according to the map, runs very near Fillik. The ground fell a good deal for some distance after leaving the village. We soon came to a narrow *khor*, bordered by very thick bushes and some good-sized trees; and,

as there was considerable evidence of game, we did not trouble ourselves about the Gash.

The natives told us that a lion prowled about Fillik, and had killed several people. We saw no signs of it; but when we met the rest of our party, they told us they had heard its roar quite distinctly, having passed at dusk within a couple of hundred yards of it, but, their rifles not being handy, they had concluded that discretion was the better part of valour.

There were swarms of doves of several varieties; and although, as a rule, these birds are extremely common throughout the Soudan, I am sure we had not seen more than half a dozen since leaving the coast. Guinea-fowl were plentiful, and there were many kinds of bright-plumaged birds, a most refreshing change. The only species of guinea-fowl we ever came across in Africa is the one with the blue comb and wattles. There were plenty of gazelles; and we saw for the first time the beautiful Dorcas gazelle (*Gazella Dorcas*), which, throughout the remainder of our journey, was far more numerous than the common variety (*Gazella Arabica*), which prefers the most arid desert. We saw, too, several herds of ariel, and had no difficulty in securing abundance of venison for our larder.

Three Houbara bustards were shot, and on our arrival in camp we found the cook-boy had caught one in a noose: we were glad to discover sporting tendencies in our servants. I never ate a more delicious bird than the bustard. It is but too frequently the case, that the game of these countries is dry and unpalatable, — at any rate, it would be thought so in civilized countries, — but this bird would be a great delicacy anywhere: its flesh when cooked is dark brown and firm, very much resembling that of a goose, and it has a flavour entirely its own. Those we shot were very fat, in excellent condition, and were very good eating, either hot or cold.



CASSALA.

At a place called Miskenab in the *khor*, we found deep wells of excellent water sunk in the sand; and we sent a camel with the water-skins to fetch some. We made a march of nine and a half hours, having an excellent day's shooting on the way.

Another long day's march of eight and a half hours brought us to Cassala, which we reached on the evening of the 7th, twenty-four days out from Souakim. If there had been nothing to delay us, the journey should not have occupied more than twelve or thirteen days. My brother had accomplished the journey in thirteen days, four years before we passed through the country; and that had allowed him a whole day's rest on the way.

Jules was, of course, much exhausted after the long journey; but the doctor declared that the dysentery had stopped, and he hoped with good food and rest he would soon begin to pick up his strength.

The day we arrived, we spent in looking for game to the right and left of the path, but did not meet with nearly so much success as on the previous day. The aspect of the country was different from any we had passed through: it had, in fact, become quite park-like, and was dotted with numerous dark-green bushes, very like laurels, and so neat-looking that they had quite the appearance of having been trimmed, the only drawback being that they sprang from dusty soil instead of from green grass.

We found the rest of our party quite well. They had been four days in Cassala, and had encamped about a mile from the town, in the dry bed of the Gash, where it was some three or four hundred yards wide, close to the shade of a huge fig-tree, covered with dark-green leaves that afforded most grateful shade. We pitched a tent for Jules under it. Close by was a garden containing orange and lime trees, watered all day long from a

sakeeych, of exactly the same kind as the wheel so well known to Nile-travellers by that name. The others had not been able to do anything towards buying or hiring camels, and of course all those we had brought from Souakim had to return to the coast: their drivers probably knew no other road, and spent their lives in going up and down. Arabs are wonderful fellows for getting into one groove, and sticking to it, and are not at all fond of "fresh fields and pastures new."

We had met extremely few caravans on our journey; in fact, I never went over a beaten track in Africa, and saw so little evidence of traffic or commerce. One day we met a caravan of seventy camels laden with *dhufra*, and mats made of the fibrous leaf of the *dhoum*-palm. These are made by the women; they are very cheap, and used for many different purposes. Some of our servants slept upon them. We always spread them about the floor of our tents; but great holes were soon eaten in these by the destructive white ants, and they fell to pieces. When we stopped any length of time anywhere, and the trees did not afford us sufficient protection against the sun, we erected temporary shelters by sticking poles in the ground, on which, in a very short time, a kind of arbour could be formed by means of this matting: this was far cooler and preferable to sitting in our own tents during the daytime. The caravan in question was accompanied by about fifty men, besides women and children,—by far the largest we encountered. Sometimes several days elapsed during which we hardly met a camel. This was a very different state of things from what I had seen during previous visits to the country, when in travelling we frequently met long strings of a hundred, and even two hundred, camels at a time. The road between Souakim and Cassala, however, though an important one, is not one of the main arteries for the commerce of the Soudan.

The natives had, so far, only brought an odd baggage-camel or two for sale; and for these, though not worth over twenty to thirty dollars apiece, they asked fifty or sixty. We had decided, that, in order to visit the Basé country, it would be needful to buy our own camels, as the people had such a wholesome dread of the whole tribe, that we knew it would be hopeless to endeavour to hire camels and drivers to take us there.

We found the governor of Cassala very polite. He was a small, insignificant-looking man, who spoke French fairly well, and seemed to give more energy to the management of his affairs than most of the Soudan officials we had previously encountered.

On leaving Cairo, we had telegraphed to Père Picard, one of the priests belonging to the Roman-Catholic mission at Keren (or, as the place is more usually called, Sanheit), asking him to send to Cassala certain servants that he had found for us the winter before. On our arrival we found a small army already assembled, four being old hands, and several having accompanied them on the chance of being employed. We were glad to see Salee, a most excellent tracker, who had proved his usefulness the previous year, among the number. The Abyssinians had come down, during the summer, near to Keren; and one of our old retainers had had a father, and another a brother, killed by them.

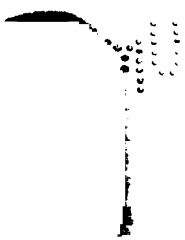
The afternoon after our arrival at Cassala, the doctor informed us that he considered Jules' condition to be most critical; his pulse was very feeble, and he had been obliged to give him egg, milk, and brandy, beaten up together, to try and keep up his strength. This was the first intimation we received of his being in a really critical condition; we had all hoped, that, as the dysentery had stopped, he would soon regain his strength, as he was of a naturally robust constitution. We had been

discussing the advisability of sending him to Sanheit with one of the European servants, and the doctor if necessary, to await our arrival there, as we knew the climate to be cool, and moreover were sure that he would receive every attention at the hands of the priests. The next day he was weaker, and gradually sank, dying about half-past ten on the evening of the 9th.

I walked up to the town immediately afterwards, and informed the governor of what had happened, so as to make arrangements for the funeral, which we knew could not be long delayed in so hot a climate. They made a rough deal coffin, covered over with dark-blue cloth; and our native servants carried him to the grave the next morning. A Greek merchant, long resident in Cassala, had given a piece of ground for a Christian burial-place in a corner of a palm and lime grove inside the walls of the town; and there we laid him, covering the coffin with the British flag. The heat was terrific, and the dust suffocating. To me fell the painful duty of reading the burial-service, — a sad office which I had never expected to be called upon to fulfil. Two Greeks were the only people present besides our own party and servants.

Jules had lived in Lort Phillips's family for over seventeen years; and he was greatly distressed, as we all were, at the death of an old and faithful servant, so far from his home and friends.

CAMP AT CASSALA.



CHAPTER VII.

Purchase of Camels. — Expedition to the Atbara. — The Village of Naouri. — Mosconas and his Son. — White Ants. — Dinner with the Governor. — The Town of Cassala. — Hyænas. — Pariah Dogs. — Collections for European Zoological Societies. — Hiring Camel-drivers. — Strike of Souakim Servants. — Departure from Cassala. — Bashi-Bazouks.

As we found it impossible to purchase camels at Cassala, Colvin and my brother Arthur started off with Suleiman, at seven o'clock on the evening of the 10th of January, for the Atbara River, where they had heard plenty were to be obtained. They were back again by half-past one on the afternoon of the 15th, having purchased a number of baggage-camels, which, taking one with another, had averaged thirty-four dollars apiece; a rather high price, as there were some poor ones among them. The Arabs had not been at all keen to sell, and they had experienced great difficulty in coming to terms with them. They had ridden across a flat, ugly country, overgrown with mimosa bushes, and, after following the track leading to Khartoum for about twenty miles, bore to the north-west, and encamped for the night. After a very early start the next morning, they separated, and went in different directions, in order to acquaint the inhabitants of the various villages with the object of their journey. This had to be done circumspectly, and the subject introduced in the most off-hand and careless manner. After considerable time had been spent in "pow-wows" with the sheiks, or head men, of the different villages,

they met again, and pitched their tent near a village called Naouri, on the edge of a cliff overlooking the River Atbara,—truly a magnificent stream, and the most important tributary of the Nile.

Naouri, belonging to the Shukereeyeh tribe, is forty-five miles from Cassala. It was a very large village, containing some thousands of Arabs. The houses consisted of mat huts. These huts, the natives take about with them; and during the rains there would be no trace of Naouri, as the inhabitants move farther north, with all their goods and chattels, to return to the same spot the following year, when Naouri would again be called into existence. This place is only a few miles north of a large permanent village, called Kourashi, chiefly inhabited by fakirs, a kind of dervishes, who have schools there. The following day, about noon, camels and their owners began arriving from all quarters. A trade anything but brisk followed. The Arab, like all Orientals, delights in long bargainings, time being of no object to him. We had already lost a great deal of time, and were impatient to get on: so, Colvin and my brother having given a good price for the two first camels offered for sale, it quickly opened the market; and acting on the system of buying at once, or sending the animal away, by evening they found themselves the possessors of about five-and-twenty camels. Although they selected the best they could find, most had the hideous wounds on the back and hip-bones, that the majority of baggage-camels have, which they at once doctored with carbolic acid. At length they came to a very fine animal, without mark or blemish, which they had purchased at an apparently reasonable price, and which they were consequently rather proud of. However, they noticed a derisive grin on the faces of the natives standing by; and, on seeking an explanation for their mirth,

were informed that the prize was an *abou gamā'l*, or father of many camels, but being old, and of no further use in that capacity, he was sold to us to do what we could with. At night a severe sand-storm arose, which nearly capsized their tent, and, of course, filled every thing — beds, water, and food — with sand.

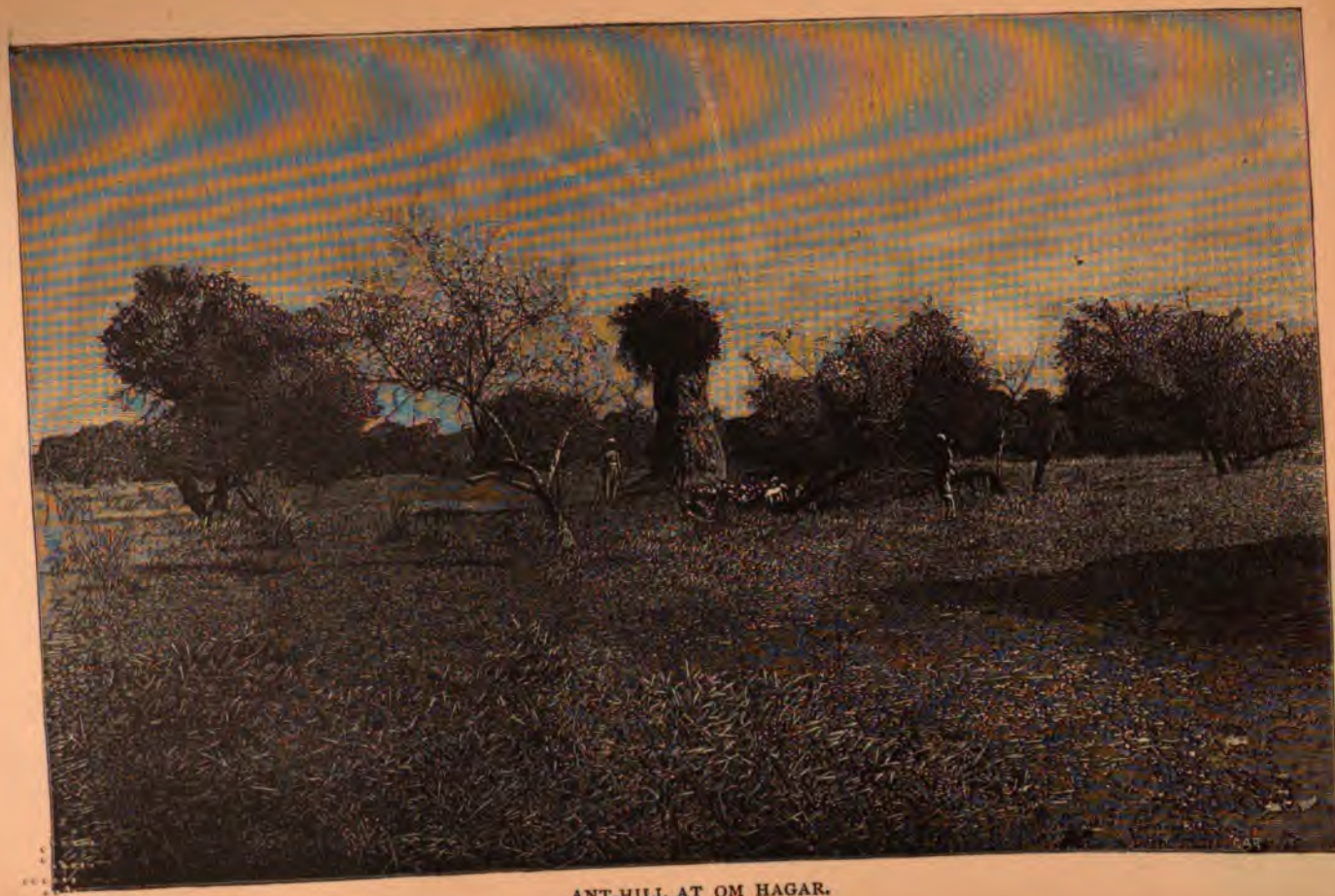
The following day the purchase of camels was continued. More cripples were brought in, which their owners attempted to impose on our party, inexperienced in camel-flesh. Whenever an offer was made, the invariable reply, accompanied by a jerk back of the head, was "Efta Allah," literally, "God open," and so, "May God open your mouth so that you may speak bigger words." However, by about midday they had completed their purchases, paid over the money, and struck camp. They then noticed a disposition, on the part of the late vendors, to abstract their camels: so revolvers were drawn, the camels tied as well as possible in the usual manner, — nose to tail, — and the homeward march commenced about five P.M.

A great deal of trouble was experienced in following the track, which they occasionally missed entirely; and it was only by observing the stars, that they were enabled to keep in the right direction, as the natives, having sold their camels, and having nothing further to expect, refused to render any assistance, and in all probability hoped they would lose both their way and their camels. They pushed on all night, only stopping to re-fasten the ropes, which for the first few hours the camels were continually breaking; and halted for a few minutes at daybreak to allow time for eating a few biscuits and dates, and reached our camp at Cassala about two o'clock the next afternoon. After a march of over twenty hours, and having been almost without food for twenty-four, naturally they were much exhausted.

During their absence we had not passed a very lively time: we had shot a few doves, and I obtained a marabou stork, the first seen. A more ugly, ungainly bird does not exist, and he is a regular scavenger; but the beautiful white feathers that grow underneath the tail-coverts are much prized by ladies. Marabous must be endowed with marvellous digestive powers. An Englishman told me, that when he was shooting in the Soudan he shot a lion, and soon afterwards missed his claws. He suspected some marabous that had been lurking about, to be the thieves; and, on shooting and dissecting two or three, found most of his lion's claws in their stomachs.

We saw a good deal of a very intelligent Greek, named Mosconas, and his son, the latter suffering greatly from rheumatism. They were endeavouring to sink some wells between Cassala and the Atbara, and also between that river and Gedariff, a town to the south-west, in the midst of a very rich district where a great deal of *dhurra* as well as tobacco is grown. Although they had gone to a great depth, they had not succeeded in reaching water; and they felt that success was very doubtful.

'Lort Phillips made a cross of mimosa-wood, which is very hard, for Jules' grave, to remain until he could send a stone out from Egypt. All wood perishes after a short time, in consequence of the white ants, which are nowhere more persistent than at Cassala. We had met with them on the road, but to no great extent, and had been able to regard them more in the light of entomological curiosities than as plagues: here, however, we had to be very careful not to leave on the ground, for any length of time, anything that could be injured by their attacks. Canvass sacks, or such things as socks, they would eat through in one night, or damage so much that holes would very soon appear in them; they were particularly



ANT-HILL AT OM HAGAR.

partial to leather, and committed great havoc among our gun-cases and portmanteaus.

Before commencing their depredations, they cover whatever they intend to eat, with earth, and work from inside this covering: this I believe they do in order to protect themselves from their natural enemies, the black ants, which are always to be found not far off, on the look out for them. The longer we stayed, the more persistent they became in their attacks; and it was only by occasionally shifting our tents, that we could obtain any peace. The boxes that contained our provisions, etc., had been made with little legs to rest upon, so that they had to build up these legs before they could obtain a footing inside: nevertheless they *would* get in, and we often found quantities of them, and the earth they had brought, covering whatever the boxes contained, the paper used to wrap up various things being frequently entirely destroyed. In this way, unless great precautions were taken, cartridges would sometimes get spoilt. In many parts of the country, they are so troublesome that it is found cheaper to use iron telegraph-poles instead of wooden ones, as the latter have so frequently to be renewed.

One evening we dined with the governor, in Turkish fashion, eating with our fingers instead of using knives and forks,—a not very delectable form of entertainment. The dinner was served on a large brass tray placed on a circular table, round which all sat, including some Egyptian officers who had just arrived after a long march, and apparently had not fed for a considerable time. Behind us, immovable as statues, and holding lamps above their heads, were some five or six White Nile slaves. The sweet and meat courses alternated throughout dinner, a rather trying ordeal for the European palate; but, on the slightest symptom of flagging on our part, the hospitable

Bey immediately insisted that we did not like our fare, upon which we were obliged to renew our efforts. We were provided with an immense number of dishes, twenty-five courses all told, including the inevitable sheep roasted whole, head and all. Once, when assisting at a similar entertainment, the attentive host gouged the sheep's eye out with his thumb and finger, and was anxious to put it in my brother's mouth, a mark of attention he had some difficulty in resisting.

After dinner we produced a magic-lantern we had brought with us from London, to the great delight of a large crowd of people that had made their appearance after the meal was over, and none of whom had ever seen such a thing before.

Cassala, next to Khartoum, is the largest town in the Egyptian Soudan, and contains a population of about fifteen thousand, besides a considerable garrison of soldiers. It is a walled town, and presents a very animated appearance every morning, when crowds of people, men and women, resort to a large open space, where they hold a market, sitting, many of them, under rough booths formed of matting supported on poles, as some protection against the fierce rays of a tropical sun; here they sell various kinds of food, cooked and uncooked, beads, gum, pepper, beans, mats, etc.

The province in which Cassala is situated is one of the richest in the Soudan. The country round the town is very fertile; and a certain amount of cotton of excellent quality is grown, besides onions, which are very large and mild, and somewhat resemble those grown in Spain; tomatoes also thrive well, and various nondescript vegetables are cultivated.

For some miles up and down the Gash, there are a number of *sakeeyehs*, or water-wheels, of the same kind as those used so much in Egypt; by their means a plentiful supply of water for irrigation is obtained.

Anything would grow here, as the soil is very rich; but the people are very lazy and unenterprising, and all they care about is to produce enough for their absolute necessities: they do not attempt to grow anything new. The two great drawbacks that any one would have to contend against, who wished to try and do something in the way of growing such a thing as cotton (which might be cultivated to any extent) in the Soudan, are the laziness and apathy of the inhabitants, hostility to innovation, and the cost of transit. As regards labour, I really believe it would be necessary to introduce fellaheen, a most industrious class, from Egypt; and I understand that the experiment has been tried to a very limited extent, and with success, on the White Nile. I am afraid that very few of the agriculturists of the Soudan have studied Adam Smith carefully.

A few years ago an enterprising Englishman, after great trouble and considerable expense, built a flour-mill at Cassala, with which he was able to grind *dhurra* for about one-eighth the price the natives are accustomed to pay for it. However, popular superstition was too much for him; they refused to have their *dhurra* ground in his mill, as they said it was "*affreet*," or pertaining to the devil. So, after struggling on for some time, he was obliged to give it up; and the deserted mill now remains as a memorial to the ignorance of the inhabitants.

A great deal of *dhurra* was growing when we were there; and caravans laden with this grain constantly arrived from the south, a great deal of it being brought by the Arabs as taxes. The government often buy it, paying the Shukreeyeh Arabs who bring it from the neighbourhood of Gallabat and Gedariff, and the Hamrans when they send any from their country on the Settite River, with salt instead of money.

Cassala is rich in hyænas, chiefly the spotted variety, although we did not find them as numerous as we had done four years

before; then we saw, one night, fully a hundred, quarrelling over the dead body of a donkey. Aylmer's horse died, and we dragged its body out on the sand, some little distance from our tents: we had cause to regret having done so, however, as night was rendered hideous by the frightful noises of these animals. Nothing of the horse was left by the morning. They are often very bold, and would not only come close to our tents, but one night one of them had the impudence to walk inside while we were in bed; on another occasion, a hyæna absconded with one of a pair of hide sandals that had been left close by the tent-door.

Occasionally we shot one or two, whose attentions were a little too marked, in the neighbourhood of our camp; but we soon learned that hyænas were a part of the sanitary arrangements of Cassala, where the whole refuse of the town is thrown outside the walls, for these animals to devour at night. They live in holes in the ground, which they dig out for themselves; and we frequently came across them. Although most cowardly animals, they are said sometimes to attack people, either when they can take them unawares, or when they are in very large numbers. A short time before we arrived in Cassala, a woman and child were killed by one as they lay asleep. The pariah dogs, too, were most troublesome. One night one of them entered our camp, and abstracted two sand-grouse pertaining to Ali. Suleiman caught the culprit, and begged us the next morning to allow him to "give dog kill;" suggesting, as a means of getting rid of the animal, to give him "shield in stomach." Suleiman invariably confused a spear with a shield.

Cassala has for a long time been the headquarters of several Germans, who are engaged in collecting wild animals to sell in Europe to the various zoological societies and menageries. When we were there they had captured several young lions, an

CASSALA NATIVES.

ant-eater, leopards, wildcats, and various species of antelopes, to say nothing of quite a number of giraffes and ostriches. The giraffes used to be promenaded about the bed of the Gash very frequently for exercise. We were told they were very troublesome to get to the coast, as they had most decided wills of their own, and required several men to look after each animal. Formerly large sums were made by this trade; but, like many others, the number of people engaged in it has increased, and the natives who catch the animals expect more for them than used to content them. A few ostriches were kept for their feathers. We saw some that had lately been plucked: they had not a feather on them, and wonderfully ugly they looked.

We were not allowed to proceed on our journey without again experiencing the pleasure of a dust-storm, for which the place is justly celebrated. Beds, baggage, every thing, were covered with a mixture of sand and dust; eyes, nose, and ears full of it, — the delights of Khor Langeb over again.

We had intended leaving a good deal of our baggage behind, to be picked up on our return; but eventually we decided to take it all on with us as far as Haikota, an Arab encampment on the Gash, — the point from which we hoped to strike into the Basé country, — and to leave some of it there, as we thought it very probable that we should not be obliged to return to Cassala at all.

Having bought camels, the next thing to be done was to engage drivers. As head man, we enlisted the services of a native of the town, whom my brother Arthur had found on his arrival in Cassala, and originally engaged as cook: he had accompanied the expedition in search of camels to the Atbara, and his talents evidently pointed more to caring for those animals than to shining in the culinary art. He rejoiced in the

name of Alkai, and was a Jalyn Arab who had settled in Cassala for many years. As a rule, they are a lazy, good-for-nothing set of fellows; but he proved an exception to the rule, and was a very hard-working man, though without sufficient authority over those we had placed under him. Having fixed on a head man, the next thing to be done was to find others to serve under him. I found three, and engaged them at the rate of five dollars a month each, they finding their own food: with this arrangement they expressed themselves as perfectly satisfied. We then gave out that we wanted more men in the same capacity; and the next morning a whole array of men of all denominations presented themselves, and expressed their willingness to go with us. We placed them all in a row, and selected the best-looking of them, making the number up to fourteen with those we had previously engaged.

We thought the whole business was settled, as we had promised them the same pay as the others; when back they came in a body, to say they could not go without higher wages. After a long discussion, we arranged between ourselves to give them four dollars a month each, and feed them as well; instead of five, and they to provide their own food. It seemed, after all, best to feed them ourselves: we were going into a country of the resources of which we knew nothing, and, whatever terms we made at the commencement, it seemed almost certain that it would end in our having to cater for them.

Having decided on making them this offer (a very good one for the country), we had all those whom we had previously engaged up in a line, and called over their names, which we wrote down, — a ceremony that much impressed them. To begin with, we decided to have nothing further to do with one of those we had selected, — a tall, powerful-looking, White Nile negro, who we thought was trying to make the others discon-

tented, — so we made him stand aside. On asking the rest if they would come on these new terms, all except three replied in the affirmative. These afterwards repented of having refused, and wanted to go with us; but we would not take them, and chose others in their stead.

This affair was no sooner settled, than the natives whom we had brought from Souakim struck, and all declared they wished to go back. We had engaged them to look after the horses, help pitch the tents, and make themselves generally useful; but, as they were becoming very lazy, we had been thinking of dismissing them, and so were not sorry to lose them. The best of them, a fine, tall, handsome fellow, named Achmet, afterwards repented, and asked to be taken on to look after the horses (of which we had purchased several at Cassala); and we acceded to his request. He had travelled the previous winter with two Austrians; and we found him most useful, particularly as a tracker, in which capacity he excelled. We were afterwards very glad of his services, and he remained with us during the whole of the expedition.

We had no difficulty in finding men to replace those who returned to the coast, but some of them proved all but useless. As to the camel-drivers, some of whom were natives of Cassala, and some from the Mahass district in the Dongola country, they were, as a rule, both lazy and incompetent. Real camel-drivers were not to be obtained; and, of those we had engaged in that capacity. most had had nothing to do with camels previously.

As we had not bought a sufficient number of camels to carry all our luggage, we had to hire a few more to take the rest of it as far as Haikota, where we intended leaving it. The governor obtained the required number for us, with Shukreeyeh drivers. We were anxious that he should dine with us before

leaving; but he excused himself, on the ground of being afraid of the night-air. Query: The nights being very warm, — from 80° to 85° Fahrenheit, — did he really dread them? or was it the fear of partaking of the flesh of swine, in some hidden form, that kept his excellency away?

It was the 17th of January before we turned our backs on Cassala, and the mountain at the foot of which it lies: this mountain rises behind the town, and is a conspicuous object in the level plain for miles around. Its sides are so precipitous, that I doubt the possibility of getting to the summit.

On the day of our start we received two or three papers dated London, Dec. 10: they had arrived *viâ* the Nile and Khartoum. No mail had reached Cassala by the Red-sea route for over a month, and we expected it would be a long time before we received any news from the outside world.

The governor gave us three soldiers; and it was arranged that they were to go with us as far as Heikita, where we proposed making a *zariba*[1] in which to deposit what baggage we wished to leave behind; and they were to remain there to guard it. We had fully determined to take no soldiers with us beyond Heikita, even if (which was more than doubtful) the Bey would have given us any for that purpose; for we knew well, from former experience, that nothing paralyzed one's movements so much as soldiers when attempting to go off the ordinary beaten track. As a rule, they are a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing set, ever quarrelling with one's camel-drivers, and greatly hated and dreaded by the independent Arabs of the country; and no wonder, for the soldiers are perpetually bullying them, and

[1] A *zariba* is a hedge formed of the prickly trees of the country, and is intended for a protection against wild beasts and men, should there be any of hostile intent lurking about at night.

think nothing of stealing their sheep, or anything they can lay hands upon.

By far the worst soldiers in the Soudan are undoubtedly the irregulars (Bashi-Bazouks); and I can fully indorse the opinion of Lieut.-Col. Stewart in his report on the Soudan recently presented to Parliament. In pointing out the great harm done by employing the Bashi-Bazouks in the collection of the taxes, he says, "Many, if not most, of these men, are very indifferent characters. They are mostly swaggering bullies, robbing, plundering, and ill-treating the people with impunity. Probably, for every pound that reaches the treasury, these men rob an equal amount from the people. They are a constant menace to public tranquillity. As soldiers they are valueless, having no discipline, nor, except in talk, do they exhibit any extraordinary courage."

CHAPTER VIII.

Journey from Cassala. — Game shot by the Way. — The Dog-faced Baboon. — Arrival at Haikota. — The German "Animal-catcher." — Visits from two Sheiks. — Sheik Achmed Ageer. — Attack on the Beni-Amers by the Basé. — Fresh Supply of Camels. — Dinner to Sheik Achmed and the German. — Success of the Magic-Lantern.

THE first day from Cassala, we accomplished a march of four and a half hours, travelling for some distance in the bed of the Gash; then we crossed to its south bank, passed through some fields in which excellent crops of *dhurra*, nearly ripe, were growing; and encamped in a plain at some little distance from a large village, composed of mat huts, and tenanted by numerous hungry-looking dogs, that barked savagely on our approach.

Not long after starting from Cassala, we found it necessary to disarm one of our escort, and, though thereby diminishing our fighting force, certainly added to our own safety. Our three Egyptian soldiers were armed with guns of a fortunately obsolete pattern, of the use of which they were almost as ignorant as a militia-man of his Martini; but, having more curiosity on the subject, one of them, while we were on the march, desirous of exhibiting his prowess in the use of fire-arms, fired at a crow that was sitting on the ground. Owing to a slight defect in the sighting of his rifle, the bullet just missed one of our baggage-camels, and grazed George's arm, who was riding on another in the caravan.

The next day we followed a regular caravan-route, which ran not far from the Gash, on its south bank. A thick grove of *dhoum*-palms lined either side, and we passed one or two small villages.

We came across game, and shot two ariel and a gazelle. Partridges were seen for the first time, and one or two added to the bag; a most acceptable addition to the larder, although they were not such good eating as chickens, notwithstanding the fact that the domestic fowl, as bred in the Soudan, is a most diminutive and skinny bird. Lort Phillips fired twice at an ariel without hitting it, and was surprised to find that the animal took no notice of his shots; it allowed him to approach to within a few yards of it, when the mystery of its apparent temerity was solved. The poor brute had been caught in a snare, which was round one of its hind-legs, and which was considerably injured by it. He terminated its existence by a shot through the shoulder, and sent it off on the back of a camel to grace Ali's kitchen.

We saw, for the first time, the baobab-tree (*Adamsonia digitata*). This well-known tree, so frequently described in books of African travel, became henceforth a familiar feature in the landscape: it is most weird and elfish-looking, having a gigantic trunk, giving out branches altogether disproportionate to its size, and, at the time of year we travelled, was entirely without leaves. The fruit, which is white and dry, grows in an oval green pod, and has a rather agreeable acrid flavour; but a little goes a long way. The natives are very fond of it, and we were told that the Basé frequently lived on it for a long time together; besides eating it raw, they pound it up, mix it with water, and cook it.

On the third day out from Cassala, as we were breaking up camp, we noticed a caravan loaded with *dhurra* going by; and

soon after, hearing a great disturbance going on amongst the camel-drivers, we rushed down to the spot where the altercation was taking place, and found that the caravan had been stopped by some soldiers, who were endeavouring to levy blackmail. The camel-drivers resisted, but, although numerically superior, were no match for the soldiers, with their rifles and sword-bayonets, which they had no hesitation in using. They had already rendered one man *hors du combat*, by a violent blow in the stomach, when we interfered; and having heard all sides of the question, — or, rather, the question from all sides, as they all spoke at once, — we comprehended that the soldiers, having to support themselves, when on the march, as best they can, feel it incumbent on themselves to do so at the unfortunate Arabs' expense, backed by the tacit consent of the authorities; and, consequently, the appearance of a "tarboosh" or fez causes the Arab to fly with his property. We gave strict orders that none of our servants were to wear the "tarboosh" while in this country.

Almost immediately after leaving the camp, we saw the fresh tracks of elephants, which we followed; they took us to the Gash, where we found a good deal of water on the surface where the bed was rocky, and narrower than we had previously seen it. This was the only place between Cassala and Haikota where the water in the Gash rose to the surface of its own accord, — what the natives, in their peculiar Arabic, call *moich sarkit*. *Moich* is the ordinary Arabic for water; but it is difficult to find an English equivalent for the word *sarkit*, an expression only made use of in the Soudan, and employed in a great variety of ways. For instance, when we once stood a chance of being lost in crossing a desert, by nearly taking what appeared to be a path, but which in reality was not one, and led miles away into the Sahara; on asking

where the supposed path led, we were told, to the *atmoor sarkit*, the former word signifying desert. Again, on starting off alone anywhere, you would be asked if you were going *sarkit;* meaning, by yourself, without taking any one with you.

Some natives, watering their goats, informed us that a herd of elephants had drunk there the day before; their marks led in the direction of the Settite River. These animals travel great distances, and, when disturbed on the Gash, usually make for the Settite, and *vice versâ*.

I never saw more sand-grouse than at this place; the ground was literally covered with them, packed so closely together that it appeared impossible for another bird to wedge itself in. When they rose, as we approached, the air was fairly rent with their peculiar guttural cry. The Arabs call them *gatta*, and this word is supposed to sound like the noise they make when on the wing.

There were baboons, too, sitting on the rocks, the *cynocephalus* or dog-faced variety (*cynocephalus hamadryas*), hideous animals which one frequently sees depicted in the ancient Egyptian sculptures. There are two kinds in North-eastern Africa, one much rarer than the other. In the spring of 1881 an Austrian travelled with us in the same steamer from Massowah to Suez, who had with him sixty-five of the rarer species alive; he was taking them to Hamburg, where he made a large sum by their sale. He told us it was the first time any had been brought alive to Europe. Both kinds are very savage in confinement: in a wild state they are not very shy, and often approach pretty close to the traveller. They appear to be regular in their habits, visiting the same localities every day, and at much the same time, in quest of food; and sleeping every night at the same place, usually on rocks in most inaccessible places, to be out of the reach of leopards or other enemies. We occasion-

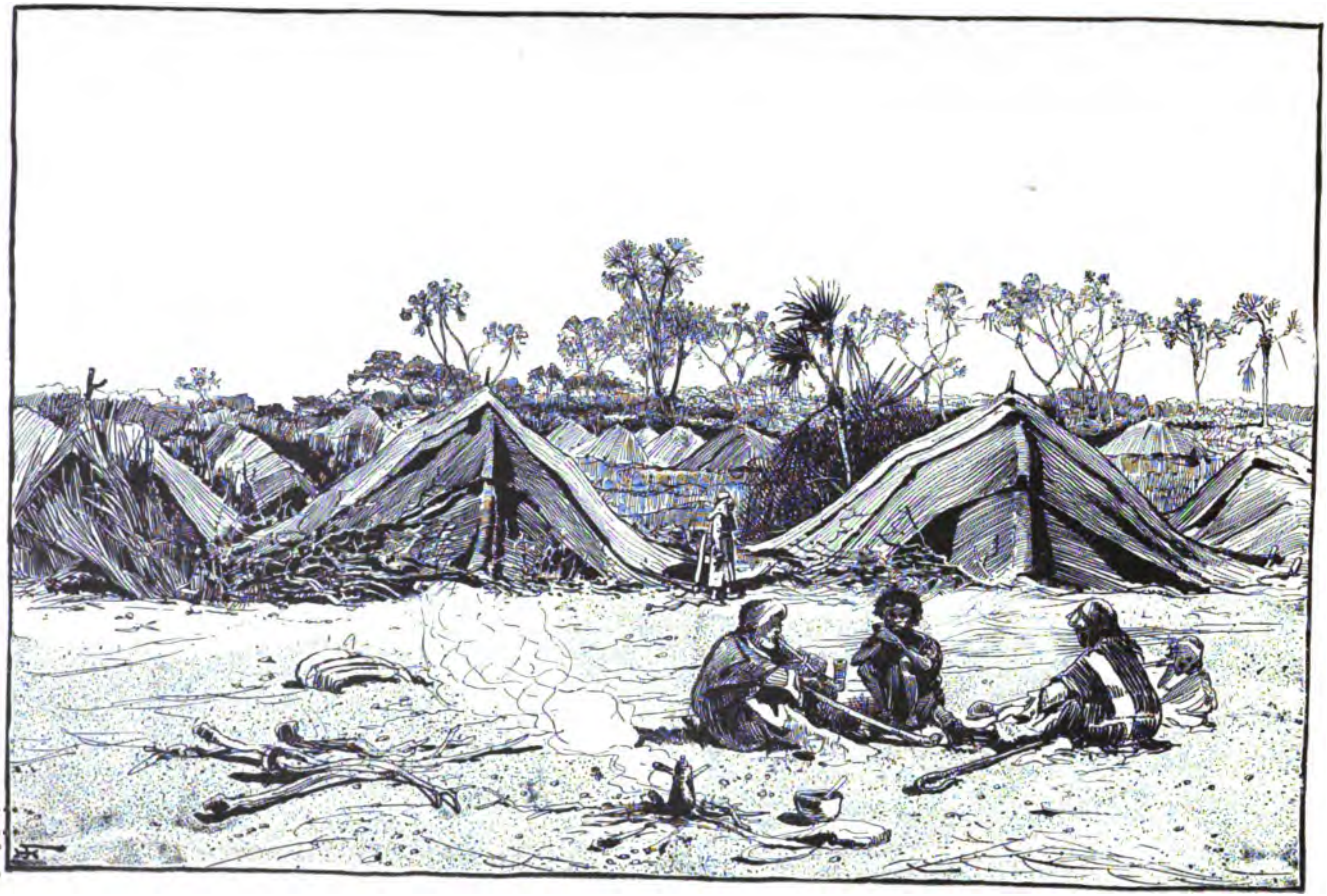
ally came across the pretty little green monkey (*cercopithecus griseo-viridis*), generally met with only in thick jungle, and near the banks of rivers. We had bought several in Cairo some years before, and taken them to England, where they proved most amusing pets. Two I had, thrived very well for three winters in a stable; after which I gave them to the Zoological Society in Regent's Park, where they very soon died.

The country gradually gave more promise of game, the trees became more numerous, and the covert thicker. To our right was a range of mountains clothed to their summits with trees, among them baobabs, as well as other varieties, some of considerable size.

We spent our third night in the dry bed of the Gash, close to a large encampment of mat huts, belonging to the Beni-Amer tribe, and called Ashbirah, — a very picturesque spot. There was abundance of dry grass; and numbers of sheep and goats, as well as large herds of cattle, were grazing on it for some miles round the village.

Our Arabs declared, for some reason only known to themselves, that Haikota was too far off to reach that night; and the next morning we discovered it was only three-quarters of an hour farther on, at which we were much annoyed, as it gave us the trouble of packing up our traps, only to unpack them again almost immediately.

Partridges were very numerous, a species of francolin; and in the long grass, and dwarf *dhoum*-palm jungle, where we found them, they rose well, and afforded capital sport. In open places they generally run on ahead of the sportsman, and are most unwilling to rise; reminding one of the habits of the French partridge at home. We shot, too, a fine male specimen of the Abyssinian hornbill (*Buzaros Abassinicus*), or *abou gumba* as it is called by the natives. It is a most curious-



HAIKOTA.

looking bird, nearly the size of a turkey, black with a few white feathers in the wings. The beak is thick, and over it protrudes a horn-like substance, the front of which is hollow; it has enormous red-and-blue wattles. It was the first time we had seen one, though we frequently met them afterwards, usually in parties of two or three; but they were extremely shy, and rarely permitted us to get within gun-shot. We also found quail for the first time, but not in any numbers.

Haikota is a large village, situated in the bed of the Gash, and formed of the usual mat huts. We encamped on its right bank, some feet above the sand. It took some time to clear a space for the camp, and involved clearing away a number of bushes, and cutting down a quantity of high grass. This done, we set to work to make a *zariba* to keep the Arabs off as much as possible; former experience of such places having taught us that we might expect them in dozens to inspect the "Inglees," their goods and chattels.

Our camp we placed close to that of a German animal-catcher, a very agreeable fellow, who had spent eight winters in the Soudan, and whose acquaintance some of us had made four winters previously on the Settite. He had built himself a house, as well as several sheds for his animals; and, when we arrived, he had three young elephants and fifteen baby ostriches in his compound. He told us that he had paid the Arabs as much as two hundred and fifty dollars apiece for elephants. Every summer he went to Europe; he obtained the best prices for his animals in New York, which he had visited twenty-three different times. As he very kindly offered to take charge of the luggage that we wished to leave behind, we gladly accepted his offer, and accordingly dismissed the soldiers; to the evident relief of the population, who appeared to have a wholesome dread of them.

The chief and, in fact, only wealth of these Beni-Amer Arabs consists of flocks and herds, of which they possess vast numbers. When the pasturage is exhausted in one part of the country, Haikota shifts its quarters, and moves, huts and all, to another.

Our first visitor was the Sheik El-belad, or head man of the village, a fine-looking old gentleman, with an immense head of grey woolly hair. We informed him of our wish to shoot in the Basé country; to which he raised no objection whatever, and seemed to regard it as a mere promenade. Later on, the sheik of the whole of that part of the country — a far more important personage — arrived. The German had informed us that he had had a good many dealings with him; that he was by far the most powerful man in the country, much looked up to and implicitly obeyed by his people. His name was Achmed Ageer; and he was said to be the second or third sheik in importance of the Beni-Amer tribe, one of the largest and most powerful in Eastern Africa. A tall, lithe, wiry, well-built man of about fifty, he was in appearance a perfect specimen of his class, and was quite the best-mannered, most plausible Arab sheik I had ever met.

From first to last, we had a great deal to do with this man; and, although at the outset he enabled us to do what we had set our minds on, he eventually played us false. When we first disclosed our wishes to him, he endeavoured to throw obstacles in the way of their attainment. He told us that no Englishman had ever travelled or shot in the Basé country before, with the exception of a Mr. Powell, who with his wife and child had been murdered by them some years before; that, the previous winter, two Austrians had arrived in his country, to whom he had given guides to go some thirty miles up the Gash, but no farther. He suggested our writing to the governor of Cassala,

to ask his aid in the matter; and said that, through a sheik who lived near Amedeb (an Egyptian military station to the north of the Basé country), we should be able to penetrate into their territory. We knew, however, that this was the last way to set to work to gain our point, as the sheik in question was friendly to the government, and had nothing to do with the part we were anxious to visit. We told him that he alone could help us; that we had been in the Soudan before, and had come again on purpose to shoot and travel among the Basé, and we trusted to him to aid us. After a very long discussion, and a number of cups of coffee had been drunk, and cigarettes smoked, he acceded to our wishes, and promised to help us. We explained to him, that we were anxious to go along the Gash, or Mareb as it is called farther up, as far as the Abyssinian frontier, and then across country to the Settite, returning along the river, and crossing over to Haikota. He did not absolutely promise that we should carry out the whole of this programme; but he said we might follow the course of the river's bed as far as the Abyssinian frontier, at any rate, and that then he thought we should have no difficulty in finding some Basé who would show us a road across the Settite, as the banks of that river were inhabited by people belonging to that tribe, who, as we had already understood, lived to the east of the Hamrans, and between them and the Abyssinians.

As soon as Achmed Ageer had promised us his aid in travelling through the Basé country, he said that in order to go there it was essential we should take some of his horsemen; after much discussion, we arranged to take four (he had at first proposed our taking ten!), and to pay them at the rate of twenty-five dollars apiece a month. Two or three of these braves were supposed to speak the Basé language, but we afterwards found that only one of them could do so; this man rejoiced in the

euphonious appellation of Bayrumphy, and was supposed to have lived for two years in the country.

Although, of course, it was essential to have some one with us who knew the language, we were well aware that four horsemen would prove a great incumbrance; particularly as we should be obliged to feed their horses as well as themselves. We knew, however, that it was a kind of tax paid to the sheik for his help in our plans, and regarded it accordingly.

The Beni-Amer Arabs about Haikota are the only people who have any dealings with the Basé, as it is only there that any are found who are conversant with the language. The Beni-Amers farther north, living on Khor Baraka, have no dealings whatever with them, and are much afraid of them.

Although, when travelling in the country, we came across one or two sheiks, who, we were told, had jurisdiction over the whole country, I had not much faith in them; for each village has its own chief, and the people of the different villages are constantly quarrelling with each other, and I do not believe that any responsible heads exist.

Only a few days before our arrival at Haikota, a number of Basé had come down from one of their villages, and made an attack on some Beni-Amers. They were mostly boys, or old men, who were looking after their flocks, only two or three miles from the village itself. Twenty-seven of them they killed, and drove off about three thousand head of cattle. Sheik Achmed Ageer informed us that he was then meditating reprisals, and gave us a most pressing invitation to unite our forces with his. When we first heard this piece of news, we thought it would entirely interfere with our going among them. We learned, however, that the people who made the attack lived at some little distance to the south of the Gash, and off our

intended route; and that, moreover, they were at enmity with that part of the tribe we proposed visiting.

As we thought it would be well to take with us more camels than we required for our baggage, knowing that some of those we had would be sure to die, or become useless, we arranged to hire several. In consideration of our paying for them at a very high rate, — namely, twelve dollars a month each, as well as feeding the drivers, — we induced some Shukreeyehs to accompany us with their camels. We hoped to add considerably to our *impedimenta* in the shape of skins and heads while in the country; and knew that no camels could be obtained from the Basé, who do not possess any. We were delayed to buy a further supply of *dhurra;* as with so many mouths to feed, both men and horses, it disappeared at a surprising rate.

While delayed at Haikota, we entertained the German and the sheik at dinner every evening. The latter experienced considerable difficulty, at first, in manipulating a knife and fork; he was very anxious to make no mistake, and watched us most carefully to see what we did with them, before he would venture himself: he soon, however, mastered the difficulty, and became quite an adept in their use. The only *désagrément* that we suffered from, in entertaining this august personage at meals, was the habit that he freely indulged himself in, of eructating both during dinner and afterwards; and I must say this was a phase of Eastern manners to which we never could fully accustom ourselves. In the opinion of an Arab or Abyssinian, this, far from being a breach of good manners or decorum, is considered a compliment to the host, showing him that his guest is enjoying the good fare placed before him.

He greatly relished our jam, and some asparagus that we had brought with us in tins. This latter, Suleiman informed him,

was the grass of our country; and he was fully convinced that it was what we fed our cattle on in England.

On one occasion we exhibited the magic-lantern, to the intense delight of a large crowd who came after dinner on purpose to see it, and had never seen any thing so wonderful before. We worked the lantern from the inside of a tent, with a sheet hung in front of the door. We always commenced the show by displaying portraits of the Queen and Prince of Wales: these were both very popular, and invariably re-demanded. We had been careful, before leaving England, to choose subjects for the slides that we thought would interest them; and their exhibition was always successful. The most popular consisted of a series of animals found in Africa, such as the lion, hippopotamus, elephant, etc.; and when we displayed a representation of a man escaping up a tree from a crocodile, with the beast opening and shutting its mouth, and trying to seize him, they fairly shrieked with laughter.

Some of the slides represented the Suez Canal, English scenes, caravans in the desert, African villages, etc.; and all these were explained to them in Arabic, to their intense delight, while the Arabic was translated into their own tongue for the benefit of those that did not understand that language. As a termination to the entertainment, we sent up one or two rockets, and lighted a Bengal light or two; by which time our reputation as wonderful magicians was fairly established among them. As a hint that the show was over, and that it was time for the crowd to retire, we hit upon the expedient of conducting the sheik, by the light of a Bengal light, to his horse, which was in waiting for him outside our *zariba*. The result was a most happy one; a veritable *retraite aux flambeaux* took place, and the camp was cleared in less than five minutes.

WALKAIT MINSTREL.

CHAPTER IX.

Departure from Haikota. — Mahomet Salee. — Abundance of Game. — Halt at Toadelook. — *Tétél.* — Adventure with a Lion on the Prowl. — A Shooting Expedition. — Fifty-seven Sand-grouse netted. — Night-watches in Hopes of a Shot.

WE left Haikota on Jan. 22, and very glad we were to make a fresh start. So far our journey, owing to unavoidable circumstances, had been a very slow one; but delays are the inevitable adjuncts of African travel. We were getting very tired, too, of the crowds of natives that surrounded our tents more or less all day. We were fortunate, however, in not having any of our *impedimenta*, that lay about the camp in all directions, stolen: in fact, during such expeditions to Africa we have always found the Arabs whom we encountered wonderfully honest folk, and scarcely lost anything through theft the whole time.

Among other visitors at Haikota, we were more than once favoured with a visit from an Abyssinian chief of the Walkait country, who was at Haikota "on business" connected with Sheik Achmed, and was accompanied by his son, a most amusing boy, who played on a curious stringed instrument, and sang to us. He really had some slight idea of singing; but his songs were very monotonous and dirge-like compositions, and were sung in his own language, which none of us understood, but we were told they were redolent of the praises of the "Inglees."

Before starting we presented Sheik Achmed with a very good tent we had bought in Cairo, with which he was much pleased. I greatly doubt if he would make much use of it, as

the sheiks generally prefer to live among their people, in the same kind of huts as they do, so that, in case of an attack by a bordering tribe, the chief's dwelling may not be conspicuous among those of his own people.

As we were leaving, he pressed us to take a fifth horseman, whom he wished to make head over the others, his pay to be five dollars a month in excess of theirs. After some hesitation we concluded to take him. He was the sole Arab from Haikota that had ever been with Englishmen before, having accompanied two to the Settite three years previously. He spoke Arabic in addition to his own language, an accomplishment wanting in the others. His name was Mahomet Salee. We liked him very much at first; but later on he deceived us, and we sent him away.

During our last night at Haikota, we heard two lions roaring near the camp, which we thought augured well for the sport we anticipated having in the Basé country. The neighbouring country is more picturesque than any we had seen so far. On either bank of the Gash was a thick fringe of *dhoum*-palms, backed by a range of mountains, greener than any we had yet come across; while in the river's bed crowds of Arabs, men, women, and children, and immense herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, lent animation to the scene.

It was half-past four before the last of our caravan was under way. We crossed the Gash, and after riding for some distance through a grove of *dhoum*-palms, recrossed it, thus cutting off a great bend, and pitched our tents above its bed, having gone only about six miles. There were wells sunk in the sand close to where we encamped, and Arabs watering large herds of goats. We were, luckily, quite independent of the Arabs in regard to milk, as, in addition to several sheep, we had a number of goats, all presents from the sheik. He himself started

with us, so as to see us fairly on our way, appearing highly to appreciate our "flesh-pots;" and we began to think he intended spending the rest of the winter in our camp.

The whole country swarmed with guinea-fowl, and there were plenty of partridges. We frequently shot the former for the pot, and cooked them in a variety of ways, but found them best of all curried. I think, too, they were not quite so dry as those one eats in England, where I regard them as the driest bird that comes to table. Shooting them is not much sport, unless they chance to fly over one's head, when they afford fine "rocketing" shots. As a rule, they run; and it is often necessary to shoot them on the ground, if they are to be shot at all. In this way we sometimes obtained four or five at a shot. When stalking antelope, they are frequently a great nuisance, as they often alarm them by their sharp, metallic cry.

Our first night out of Haikota was the coldest we had yet experienced, and there was a very heavy dew. We began to think we had started short of blankets; and I accordingly rode back for some, and returned just as the caravan was starting. The nights afterwards were often colder still, and we were many times glad of the extra coverings.

We made a six-and-a-half-hours' march, and formed quite a cavalcade. We all rode horses, and had as escort the sheik, some of his mounted retainers, and our five horsemen. Our next halting-place was Toadelook. About a quarter of a mile from the Gash, were a hundred acres or more of tall, rank grass, growing in what, for a long time after the rains, is a swamp, but, at the time we visited it, was all dried up, with the exception of a small piece at one end, where there was water, said to be much resorted to by game going to drink.

Water is always to be obtained in the Gash by digging, but it is often very far below the surface. At that time it fortu-

nately could be readily obtained by scraping away the sand; we were not even obliged to do this, as some Arabs who had been there lately had done it for us, and had moreover made reservoirs of mud in which to put the water for their beasts to drink. Plenty of fine green grass grew in the river's bed, and coarse high grass lined either bank.

On the way to Toadelook we saw *tétél* (*Bubalis mauritanica*) for the first time. There are two varieties of this antelope, both of which were frequently encountered and shot. They are ugly, ungainly-looking beasts, but their flesh was the best to eat of all the antelopes we came across. In South Africa, where both varieties are found, it is called the hartebeest.

Immediately on their arrival, my brothers took their light rifles, and made for the marsh, thinking by chance to find some gazelle or *tétél* returning from the water. They had just arrived at the watering-place when they espied a lion, lying on the top of a slight eminence, evidently on the look out for any animal coming to slake its thirst. As the lion had not perceived them, and their rifles were of very small calibre, one of them lay down concealed under a bush, about a hundred yards from the lion, while the other made for the caravan, which had just arrived, to fetch a heavy rifle. He returned as quickly as possible, with a ten-bore, and out of breath from running. The lion on the top of the mound was partly hidden from them, and my brother was unsteady from running in the heat: so that, what with that, and the excitement of firing at the first lion seen, he either missed him altogether, or wounded him very slightly. With an angry growl he started up, and trotted towards them. They reserved their fire till he was at close quarters, in order to make sure of him. Just as they were going to fire, he turned off suddenly at right angles; and, before either of them could get a second shot, he disappeared in grass eight or

ten feet high. Dreadfully disappointed, they followed him, but saw no more of him in the jungle to which he had retreated. Returning to camp, my brother (who had missed the lion) made a very long and successful shot at a gazelle galloping. If it had only been the lion instead!

The next day we all went out in parties of two, with our rifles, in hopes of getting a shot at buffaloes or other big game. Aylmer and one of my brothers followed up a large herd of buffaloes for some miles, only to see them disappear full pelt in a cloud of dust, a long way ahead. Antelopes were not very plentiful, but we managed to secure a fine bull *tétél* and a doe *nellut*. This latter animal is a most beautiful creature, with a mouse-coloured skin; it was the first we had met with that year. It is common in South Africa, where it is called *koodoo;* while in Abyssinia, and some parts of the Soudan, it is known as the *agazin*.

We spent another day at Toadelook; and, although finding no big game, secured three *tétél*, and so kept the larder well supplied, and had, besides, plenty of meat for our men. We had so many people about us, that we were enabled to shoot a great deal, and yet feel that nothing would be wasted; we were always very particular about this, and never shot anything to waste. The sheik left us, as he said, to go a little farther up the Gash, where he expected to meet some of his horsemen returning from the Basé with camels laden with *dhurra*. As none of the Basé we ever came across grew any worth speaking of, this was only a polite excuse, invented on the spur of the moment, for leaving our camp.

As large numbers of sand-grouse arrived morning and evening to drink, Lort Phillips thought it a good opportunity to test a clap-net he had brought with him from England; and accordingly he set it close to the water, and, in one haul, caught

fifty-seven birds. This net proved frequently useful, not only in catching sand-grouse, but pigeons and doves as well; and we often used it when we wanted them for food, and were anxious not to disturb the country by firing shots, in case, by so doing, we should frighten away any animals wont to frequent the watering-places, near to which we were often encamped.

At Haikota we had bought some fresh ostrich-eggs, the contents of which we placed in bottles to be used when required for making omelettes. *Omelette à l'autruche* was for some time quite a common dish with us for breakfast; I must acknowledge, however, that we found, that, although eatable, they had rather a strong flavour, and we should have preferred the eggs of the domestic fowl, had they been obtainable.

There being a moon, two of our party watched some hours by the water, perched more or less uncomfortably on the branches of trees, in hopes of getting a shot at some animals coming to drink. For the first two or three hours this kind of thing is exciting enough; everything is still, and the sportsman hears the least sound. After a time, however, a drowsy feeling steals over him; and it is only with a great effort he can keep awake, or from falling off his perch. In fact, after a long day in the blazing sun, it is often more than he can do, as we sometimes found by experience. Occasionally, after watching in vain for a long time, a noise, as of some large animal approaching, is heard. To reach the water, it must pass within a few feet of where you are sitting. From the noise it makes in the bushes, it must be large game. At last the unknown animal stands out in the moonlight; and it is only a hyæna, after all! Such was their fate that night; but soon afterwards they heard a tremendous crashing through the jungle, which set every nerve tingling. They felt sure the noise could be caused by nothing less than a herd of buffaloes,

and such was indeed the case. The animals, however, got their wind, and went off at a gallop, with their thirst unquenched. For some time longer they waited, in hopes either that they would return, or some other herd make its appearance, or, perchance, that a single bull buffalo might visit the pond; for often the largest and fiercest bulls separate themselves from the herd, and wander about alone. None, however, arrived. They heard a lion roar, and thought they were going to have a visit from the king of beasts; but the roar gradually became fainter and fainter, as he evidently made off in the opposite direction. At last a gentle rustling was heard in the grass, and a *dik-dik* (*Nanotragus hemprichianus*), the smallest of the antelope tribe, and not much bigger than a hare, made its appearance, looking timidly about it for a hidden enemy, before daring to drink, and at the same time uttering the peculiar cry from which it has obtained its name. They did not disturb it, but let it quench its thirst in peace; and then, having had sufficient excitement for one night, and the moon having gone down, — it being then three o'clock in the morning, — they returned to the tents.

CHAPTER X.

The Camp moves forward. — Scarcity of Game. — Water easily obtainable. — Difficulties of the Journey. — Baby Crocodiles. — Sheik Achmed rejoins the Travellers. — A *Battue*. — Mimosa-trees. — Road-cutting through the Jungle. — A Buffalo Adventure.

AFTER spending these two days at Toadelook, we made a farther move forward, being anxious to get well into the country without more delay; for we felt all the time that Sheik Achmed Ageer might give us the slip, and our people refuse to proceed farther. We made a march of only five hours and a half, encamping at a place called Toadwan. We pitched the tents high above the river-bed. Although we had considerable difficulty in getting the camels up, as the bank was steep, and a good many bushes had to be cut down, and grass cleared away, before the tents could be pitched, we were glad we had chosen this position; for the next morning, on awaking, there was a thick fog, — a most unusual phenomenon in this country. Whenever practicable, we encamped above the river's bed; for, though clean sand was very comfortable for the purpose when there was no wind, we felt, that, if the water were near the surface, we might, by sleeping there, run the risk of getting fever.

We readily obtained water, by digging to the depth of about a foot; and in a rocky *khor* close by, a tributary of the Gash, there were some stagnant pools, but no signs of game, nor had we on the march seen any whatever. We were disappointed in

not finding game at Toadwan, as our Arabs had held out great hopes of our getting rhinoceros there. On the spot we had chosen for our encampment, there were the traces of many recent fires. It was evidently the place that had been selected by the Basé for their first night's halt, after they had driven off the cattle captured from the Haikota people; and there was plenty of evidence of their having slain and eaten some of the beasts. The next day we pushed five hours farther into the country; on the way coming to another *khor*, called Sobat, which we explored for some distance, and found running water, which very soon, however, lost itself in the sand. On either side grew coarse grass, ten to twelve feet high.

We were obliged to let the caravan travel the greater part of the way in the sandy bed of the Gash, which was most fatiguing for the camels. One of those bought on the Atbara had already died, and one or two others were pretty well *hors du combat.* The latter part of the day's journey was accomplished by the caravan cutting off a great bend in the river, and it was no joke to get the camels through the grass and thick fringe of *dhoum*-palms that bordered the bank. Some of us followed the course of the river; the great inducement of *moieh sarkit*, or water above the surface of its bed, being held out to us. There is always a certain amount of excitement in approaching water where it is scarce and watering-places a considerable distance apart; for, in a game-country, there is always a good chance of encountering animals, either drinking or returning from the water. We found the banks of the Gash narrowed very much, while great rocks lying here and there made it very difficult for our horses to travel; and, in one place, these rocks rose to the height of sixty or seventy feet on each bank.

We found a good deal of water, containing small fish and two or three baby crocodiles. It is extraordinary how these crea-

tures are often found in the smallest pools; and we were informed that, during the rains, very large ones are seen near Cassala. As the Gash loses itself in the sand, I am at a loss to know what becomes of these animals; for any pools that remain in the dry season are so small that they could not afford accommodation for any but the smallest crocodiles. Perhaps they bury themselves in the sand, and lie *perdu* till the next rainy season comes round, as, I believe, is the habit of alligators in some parts of South America during the dry season. We saw a good many antelopes, and the fresh tracks of a herd of buffaloes. Tamarind-trees were seen for the first time; the fruit is a very favourite food of baboons, and wherever this tree is seen, there are sure to be some not far off. We again encamped above the Gash, at a point where its bed widened considerably, and where the country looked less promising.

The sheik joined us on the march. He told us he had been to look after the Basé who had made the raid on his cattle, and killed so many of his people; he had got a number of them penned in a cave, and some of the Beni-Amers had surrounded it, and were trying to starve them out. He expressed his intention of returning the following day to the place where they were, which was some distance to the south of the Gash. According to his statement, he had at first applied for assistance to the governor of Cassala, asking him to supply troops with which to attack the hostile Basé. This request the governor had refused, and told him to fight his own battles, and to take vengeance on the Basé in his own way. He was justly aggrieved at this; as he said, and with some reason, that he paid yearly heavy taxes to the Egyptian authorities, and it was very hard that they should refuse him their assistance when he stood in need of it.

The next day we went out for a day's shooting, but were not very successful. Achmed Ageer insisted on going out with Lort Phillips and Aylmer. Lort Phillips dismounted in a great hurry, to stalk some *tétél*, and in doing so let his horse go loose. A long chase followed, in which the sheik joined. This gave him an opportunity of displaying his horsemanship, of which he was very proud. There is nothing the Arabs delight in more than in galloping their horses furiously for about a hundred yards, and then reining them suddenly up on their haunches when at full speed. With the cruel Turkish bits they all use, this is very poor fun for the horses; indeed, nearly all those we saw suffered from curbed hocks, caused, I imagine, by this trick of their riders.

The sheik carried out his intention of leaving us, and took his departure the following day; at which we were very well pleased, for we were getting tired of his company.

Before moving any farther into the country, we indulged ourselves in a *battue* of the quail and partridges, which were very numerous in the patches of dry grass that grew on what, in the rains, would be islands in the Gash. It was the only place, during the whole expedition, where we found quail in any considerable numbers. It was terribly hot work; but the most uncomfortable part of it was, that we got covered from head to foot with horrible black ticks. These creatures were in appearance exactly like those that infest the camels, and stuck so tightly to our clothes with their legs, that it was often no easy work to dislodge them.

Our next march was at some little distance from the Gash, and through an open country, in which grew clumps of mimosa-trees, of a different kind from those we had hitherto seen, growing very straight to a height of about twenty feet, — trees, not bushes. The outside bark was generally wanting; under-

neath, it was of a reddish-brown colour. This tree was easily distinguished from the other species of acacia so common all over the Soudan. It produced considerable quantities of gum; and we gathered some beautiful amber and white pieces, each weighing three or four ounces, and mostly round in form; they presented very much the appearance of preserved apricots. A good deal of it, however, was of a bright red colour, and, I should think, worthless, as it was gritty and by no means pure. Gum is not found in sufficient quantities, in these districts of the Soudan, to be worth exporting; the best comes from Kordofan and Darfour, provinces to the west of the White Nile, and some also from the Blue Nile.

We made a very bad march of not more than ten miles, and encamped in the Gash, where we had to dig seven feet deep for water before we could have our dinner cooked. Lort Phillips dug a great part himself; he was always most energetic on such occasions, and ever ready to lend a helping hand when anything of the kind had to be done. This had generally a very salutary effect on the Arabs, who were usually very lazy, but always more willing to work when they saw we were desirous to join them ourselves.

We were greatly delayed by being obliged to cut a way for the camels through a great deal of very high grass, in order to cross the Gash; it was literally necessary to fight one's way through it, foot by foot. This tall grass, often attaining a height of from ten to fourteen feet, was a great nuisance: it usually fringed the river's bed on either side, and often ran a long way back; on horseback or on foot it was almost impossible to get through it, except by following paths trodden down by elephants or buffaloes. Although affording splendid covert for big game, it was often a source of great difficulty in shooting. Animals *would* get into it, and you might often pass

close to them without being aware of their presence. If we wounded buffaloes in the open, they would almost invariably make for it, when it was of course extremely dangerous to follow them, as, by so doing, one might receive a charge at close quarters. In fact, the grass was often so thick that it was quite possible to get within a yard or two of a buffalo without seeing anything of him. An instance of this occurred to my brother and myself when shooting in the Bogos country on the borders of the Dembelas territory the previous winter.

It was the first time any of us had seen these animals, and we had wounded two; one of these made for the open, while the other had taken to the high grass; this one we followed by its blood-tracks until we reached the edge of the grass into which they led. During our pursuit, and before arriving at this covert, we had once or twice caught a glimpse of it disappearing among the thick trees that grew in that part; but as it went off at a gallop on our approach, we soon lost sight of it again. We were debating whether we should follow it, when, without giving us much time to think, the infuriated beast rushed out of the grass, and charged straight at my brother. The grass was so high that neither of us had seen it until we were close upon it.

We were standing side by side when the buffalo charged my brother; and as he could not see the beast until it was within four or five feet of him, he had to fire in such a hurry that he barely had time to raise his rifle to his shoulder. His bullet struck the animal's horn, which turned the brute sharply round to the right, and it disappeared into the grass again. I fired after it as it was disappearing. After this we concluded that we would not attempt to follow it farther, but try and drive it out. This grass formed a belt from fifty to a hundred yards

in width, which bordered a *khor* called Fur-fur, where water flowed for about two miles, and then lost itself in the sand.

We threw stones and sticks after the buffalo, without any result; and a native who was with us climbed a tree to see if he could catch sight of it, but could neither see nor hear any thing of it, so that it was impossible to determine whether the animal was dead or not. About an hour after, on approaching the grass from the side of the *khor*, we heard something moving inside, and making a noise as though endeavouring to rise. The natives, on hearing this, were most anxious that we should set fire to the grass, and so drive the brute out; but the grass was too green for this to be done, and we did not attempt it. My brother finally climbed a tree, while I stood in the bed of the *khor* in case the buffalo should come out in my direction. I had not long to wait before I heard my brother sing out, "Look out, it's coming!" The words were hardly out of his mouth, when I heard a noise in the grass; and the buffalo emerged opposite to where I stood, about sixty yards off, and made straight for me. A lucky shot in the ear turned it, and it fell on its side.

It proved to be a large cow; and my shot, though a fatal one, by no means finished her at once. She was game to the last, and several times tried to rise, and charge me: the poor brute was, however, done, and a second shot soon put an end to her. On examination we found that the first shot had struck her rather far back. We then went after the other wounded buffalo. Salee was with us, and tracked it in the most wonderful way for over six miles. The track often became so faint that we lost it altogether; and the animal led us through very thick covert, several times across the *khor*, and over a hill. Just at dusk, as we were thinking of giving it up, Salee declared that he was sure, from the appearance of its tracks, that we were

not far off; and very shortly we heard it bellowing, and soon found it lying down. A second shot quickly terminated its sufferings; and both of us had the satisfaction of bagging a buffalo on the first occasion that any of these animals had been seen. Unfortunately they were both cows. A lion had scented the last one, as we found the fresh tracks of one following her footsteps for some distance.

CHAPTER XI.

Arrival at Wo Ammar. — First Interview with Basé. — A Basé Village. — Giraffe-stalking. — The Village of Koolookoo. — Deputation from the Village. — The Sheik's Son makes himself "generally useful." — Presents for the Deputation. — The Koolookoo Villagers much interested in us. — Visit to the Village. — Women of Koolookoo.

THE following day, Jan. 30, we made a farther march of five hours and a half, encamping high above the Gash, where the river makes a great bend. This place rejoiced in the name of Wo Ammar, and was a very pretty spot, the banks of the Gash being thickly fringed with high grass and *dhoum*-palms, many of them of great size, and covered with creeping plants; while on either side rose a chain of hills.

A fine sunset completed a very pretty picture: as a rule, the sunsets were not remarkably beautiful, owing to the absence of clouds, but on this occasion there were a great number.

There were plenty of guinea-fowl and partridges on the banks; and in the river's bed we found several herds of *tétél*, on our arrival, coming upon them suddenly, having been travelling away from the Gash all day, until we abruptly struck it at this point. For the first time we came across a very pretty little antelope, smaller than a gazelle, called by the Basé *mora*, by the Arabs *oterop;* it has a very rough chestnut skin, and I believe it to be the *Calotragus montanus*. The country through which we passed had all been burned; and there was, in consequence, very little game, there being no grass left. We went

BASE

through a large grove consisting entirely of *hegleek*-trees (*Balanetes Ægyptiaca*), and extending for four or five miles. The Arabs are very fond of the fruit of this tree, but I must confess we none of us found it very palatable. Elephants also enjoy the fruit, and will gather them one by one; we several times found the trees overturned by these animals, and it was evident, from the amount of trampling that had taken place, that they had stopped to eat the fruit. This tree is also so rich in potash that it is used as a substitute for soap. It was the first time in our travels that we had ever come across a country in which these trees were the sole kind, though in parts they were common enough here and there, growing with other species.

The previous evening some excitement had been caused in camp by a report that some Basé had been seen skulking about the tents during the night; and on this day, Jan. 30, 1882, some of these redoubtable people were for the first time seen by us, and, moreover, "interviewed;" but I do not think even a "New-York Herald" reporter would have got much out of them. On the march we suddenly came across a party of eight or ten, engaged in collecting the fruit of the baobab-tree. All took to their heels, and made off as fast as they could, except one, who was fairly treed, and could not get down from his perch before we came up to him. He appeared to expect to be instantly killed, and stood trembling all over like an aspen-leaf, the picture of most abject terror. He did not know what to make of us, when, instead of being led to instant execution, he was presented with a knife by my brother, while Suleiman gave him some food.

Bayrumphy called after the fugitives in their own language, and endeavoured to make them understand that we were peaceably inclined; but it was no use; they only ran the faster, and

we soon saw them disappear over the brow of a hill. They were much blacker than any of the Arabs we had seen before, with very negro-like features, and were evidently considerably behind the people of the adjoining countries we had visited, in the scale of civilisation. Their sole clothing consisted of a piece of skin fastened round the waist.

Baobab-trees were exceedingly numerous. They nearly all had sticks driven into their trunks, one above the other, to enable the natives to climb them. This they do, not merely for the purpose of gathering the fruit, but also to collect the honey which is often found in large quantities in these trees.

On our journey of Jan. 31 we saw the first Basé village, called Fodah, a small collection of conical-roofed huts, perched, as all their villages are, on the side of a hill, near the top. The Basé not only inspire terror in the hearts of their neighbours, but are themselves very much in dread of every one else. "Their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them." We passed by some tombs, and through what had been *dhurra*-fields, but saw no people. The Arabs were most anxious that we should not fire our guns until we had "interviewed" some of the natives, as they feared that by doing so they would only be unnecessarily alarmed. There was fortunately very little provocation to do so, as we saw scarcely any game.

The whole day's march was at some distance from the Gash, and, as I before mentioned, through a country that had been recently burned. We were at a loss to imagine what could be the object of burning so much country. It certainly had the effect of driving away every head of game. At night we constantly saw fires on the hills; and were told, that, though we did not see them, there were plenty of Basé living all about,

and that they made these fires to telegraph, as it were, that there were strangers in their country.

We saw the footprints of great numbers of giraffes that had been there during the last rainy season, when the place had been little better than a swamp; and their marks in the mud had dried hard. We felt there was no chance of seeing any of the animals when we passed through, as there was simply nothing for them to eat. In our experience of African game, with the exception of elephants, giraffes are the most wide-ranging of all; and we frequently saw their footprints at very great distances from water. They are very difficult to shoot, their long necks giving them a great advantage over the hunter, as they can see him long before he is aware of their being in the vicinity, and thus frequently make off without being seen at all. They are, moreover, very keen-scented. Their food chiefly consists of the leaves of the trees, which are, as a rule, so low that their long necks enable them to see over them.

One day my brothers had gone out to see what they could obtain in the way of game, and had fallen in with the fresh marks of a giraffe. They, therefore, ascended a hill to observe if any were in sight, and soon made out three or four, feeding in the plain below them. Quickly taking their bearings, they descended, but had to go a very long way round, to avoid approaching them down wind. After a very long stalk, in which they became much heated, they felt sure they could not be far off, and were advancing very cautiously, moving the twigs of the trees aside with their hands before pushing their way through them, so as to make as little noise as possible, when suddenly they heard the report of a shot, and at the same moment the sound of some heavy animals crashing through the jungle, which was so thick that they could not be seen, though barely a hundred yards away. One of the Arabs,

to whom they had intrusted an express rifle, had let it off. It had been given to him locked; but he had been playing with the locks, and so managed to discharge it. They were naturally greatly annoyed and disappointed, but determined to return to the same place the following day; this they did, and were rewarded by shooting a very fine bull. Although there is not much of a trophy to be obtained from a giraffe, they are much valued by the Arabs. The flesh we found rather tough and strong, but we ate it cooked in various ways; and the natives were very fond of it. The hide is exceedingly tough, and is much prized for making shields; and the tails make excellent fly-whisks.

Whenever we shot a large animal, such as a buffalo or a giraffe, there was a great clamouring for a piece of hide to make a shield. Every Arab wanted some, and we endeavoured to divide the skin as fairly as possible; but it was often difficult, not to say impossible, to satisfy everybody, and we began to wish the animals had been born without skins. When they did not want to manufacture shields out of the hide for their own use, they could easily obtain a dollar at the nearest town for a sufficient quantity to make one.

The trees along the Gash got thicker and more numerous, the farther we plunged into the country; and we noticed several varieties we had not met with before, amongst others, some very like English pear-trees in appearance. There was, too, a very curious grass, with a head to it like cotton; and we regretted that none of our party were botanists.

After a night spent in the river-bed opposite Fodah, we pushed five or six miles farther up, and encamped near a large village, situated on the spur of a hill on the right bank of the Gash, and called Koolookoo; we suddenly came in sight of this place on turning a bend of the river. The inhabitants, as they saw

OUR CAMP AT KOOLOOKOO.

our caravan winding along the river-bed, were seized with a panic; and with our glasses we could see them crowding to the summit of the hill on which the village was situated. We placed our camp, contrary to our usual custom, in the river-bed, as the Arabs were afraid to spend the night among the trees and bushes until we had interviewed and made friends with the people. Here it was necessary, before proceeding any farther, to have a "palaver" with the authorities. Accordingly, as soon as we arrived, Bayrumphy and two other horsemen rode up to the village. They very soon returned, bringing with them the sheik's son, and three other men. The sheik himself was away. They carried spears and shields, as all do in these countries. These they left on the bank of the river opposite to that on which we were sitting, discussing our luncheon; and crossed over to us, accompanied by Bayrumphy and the other horsemen.

Their costume was exceedingly simple and unpretending. It consisted of a scrap of dirty cotton cloth tied round the waist, with an undergarment of leather. These were, however, the grandees of the village; and we afterwards found that scarcely any one, not of exalted rank, indulged himself in such an excess of raiment. We presented them each with a piece of Manchester cotton cloth, with which they were delighted; and proceeded, without further delay, to divest themselves of what little clothing they possessed, and to wrap our gifts round their waists instead. To the sheik's son we presented, in addition, a piece of maroon velvet, on which were fastened little silvery ornaments like buttons. This he put round his neck in place of a necklace of dried palm-leaf, which he discarded. On his wrists he wore palm-leaf bracelets; and as we had no better to give him, he stuck to his own, which were indeed far prettier than any we could have given him in their place, their light-

yellow colour contrasting well with the glossy black of his skin.

This sheik's son, whose name was Longay, stayed with us the whole time we were in the Basé country, and was throughout most faithful and devoted. In alluding to him, George said one day, "The king's son is learning to clean knives;" and, indeed, he made himself most useful in that capacity, as well as in fetching wood for the cook, and drawing water. He often, too, induced others among his people to work for us, when, without his help, they would have done nothing at all. On parting from us, he fairly shed tears; and, altogether, he was the best specimen of the completely "untutored savage" I ever came across.

We gave each of the men who came from the village a knife, a looking-glass, some pins, needles, and cotton thread. We had bought a great quantity of such things in England, for the purpose of giving them as presents to the natives, and found them most useful. We regretted, however, that we had not bought more Manchester cotton and beads, as these are things they appreciate more than any thing you can give them.

We could see from our camp part of the village of Koo-lookoo, some huts built on the spur of the hill; and, while this interview and dressing-up of the four Basé was in progress, their brethren, together with "their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts," had clambered up a great rock at the back of the village, and we could see great numbers of them looking down on us, and wondering who we were, and what we had come for. Our people did not at all admire the appearance of the Basé, who they declared resembled baboons. The Basé have a very peculiar way of resting (which is, I believe, common among many of the tribes on the White Nile): they place the sole of the right foot against the left knee, a mode of repose

THE MAREB AT AIBARO.

which to a European seems most uncomfortable and almost impossible. The accompanying wood-cut is engraved from a photograph which Aylmer took on the Mareb. The men had no idea at the time, that they were being taken, so that the position is a perfectly natural one.

The next day Lort Phillips, Colvin, and I, with two of the horsemen and three or four Basé, rode up to the village of Koolookoo. Just before reaching the huts, we passed, on our right, the remains of a house built of sun-dried brick, which had evidently been a much more substantial dwelling than any the natives ever build. This house, we were told, had been erected by Mr. Powell, an English gentleman, who with his wife and child had been murdered by the Basé some twelve or fourteen years ago. Mr. Powell was the brother of the unfortunate gentleman who recently perished in a balloon-accident; he had spent some time at Koolookoo, and had entered the country from the north. They were massacred, not at Koolookoo itself, but by some people who lived not far off, the same who made the raid on Haikota, which has previously been mentioned. Koolookoo is a very small place, and the conical-roofed huts present much the appearance of large bee-hives. There was merely the semblance of a path leading up to it; and the latter part of the way was so steep we were obliged to dismount, and proceed on foot.

The women were particularly shy, and most of them nearly naked; all wore beads and cowrie-shells, if they had little else; a few wore anklets made of the skin of some wild animal; one carried a skin cross-belt. We took a number of little things with us to give away, as we were anxious to conciliate the people as much as possible. I offered one woman some needles and thread; a gift she declined, complaining very sorrowfully that they were useless to her, as she had no clothes, and con-

sequently no mending of old garments or making of new to effect. Her remark was almost literally true, as her sole covering was a piece of goat-skin worn round the loins as an apron.

We ascended to the top of the hill above the village, and were rewarded by a most extensive view, and saw one or two other small villages on distant hills; on the top of this one were great boulders of granite, and on the very summit a hut. We found mats, cooking-pots, and other valuables, stowed away in holes in the rock; as the natives, when they first descried us, had dragged them up there, fearing we might prove to be enemies.

In the afternoon those of us who had visited Koolookoo went out shooting, and those that had not went to see it. We killed two *nellut* and a *tétél*, to the great delight of some of the Basé who were with us. They ate the liver raw, first squeezing the contents of the gall-bladder over it to give it a flavour; this was also what we had seen the Arabs do with whom we had formerly travelled. Great quantities of the flesh they cooked on the spot, and bolted in enormous mouthfuls. The inhabitants of these countries at their meals are not a pretty sight. I have seen our camel-drivers devour a whole bullock raw at a sitting, so that there was absolutely only the skin remaining. They waste nothing, and those parts that with us are thrown away are by many of them considered the choicest morsels.

We were anxious to give an entertainment with the magic-lantern after dinner; but the bidden guests did not at first feel sufficient confidence in us to trust themselves in our camp at night. The women, too, who were usually the water-carriers, did not dare for a day or two to come down from the village to the Gash to get water; and this duty at first devolved on the men. Very soon, however, curiosity overcame this fear, and they came to our camp in crowds.

CHAPTER XII.

Scarcity of *Dhurra*. — A Number of Basé join our Camp. — Water-carriers. — Another deserted Village. — Ceremony of making Peace. — Friendliness of the Basé Women. — The Mareb. — Buffaloes seen for the First Time. — More Basé join the Camp. — Exciting Stalk after an Ostrich. — A Leper. — Game abounds.

On Feb. 3 we moved forward again. The *dhurra* was running short; at least, the time was not far distant when we should have none left. There were fifteen horses and from thirty to forty men to feed, and it was difficult to calculate how long it would last; for, although we had usually enough meat for the men, they could not live entirely upon it. Our guides told us that four or five hours' march farther up the Gash there was a village where as much as was required could be bought. On our arrival there, *dhurra* was found to be very scarce, and absurdly dear; and, while we wanted it by the camel-load, the natives only brought it literally in handfuls. In fact, very little, almost no *dhurra*, is grown on the Gash much above Cassala. The Basé did not care for money, but wanted cotton cloth and beads, which they wished to exchange with us for *dhurra*. We soon saw, however, that scarcely any was to be obtained. We were obliged, moreover, to be very chary of our supply of cotton cloth and beads. I never came across any African tribe so fond of beads as the Basé; and the men are not far behind the women in this respect.

The village near which the *dhurra* was supposed to grow is called Mai Daro. On our way, numbers of Basé joined us;

and when we arrived there must have been fully eighty to a hundred of them. They had fastened themselves to us in the hope of getting meat; and we were obliged to explain to them, that having a very large party of our own to feed, although we hoped to obtain sufficient game to supply them as well, it was impossible for us to promise to do so. They replied, that, when they could get no meat, they would live on the fruit of the baobab-tree; that they were quite accustomed to doing so, and frequently had no other food to depend upon.

On our way to Mai Daro, Lort Phillips and I came across a party of Basé felling trees, clearing a space in which to plant *dhurra* against the next rainy season. On first beholding us they were much frightened, probably never having seen white men before, and were going to run away; but we both exclaimed "*Maieedah*," a Basé word which we generally found acted on them as a kind of talisman; it seems to signify "How do you do?" and "We are friends," in one: its enunciation, at any rate, generally had a magical effect. On hearing "*Maieedah*" pronounced, the men in question insisted on our dismounting, and gave us some "beer," made of *dhurra*, which they were drinking. It was very sour and extremely nasty. They had a great quantity of it, and evidently thought it very good, judging from the amount they consumed; several of them were decidedly intoxicated. They carry all liquids in very neatly plaited baskets, made by the women out of the leaves of the *dhoum*-palm, — so finely plaited as to be completely waterproof. The women are the water-carriers generally, in fact nearly always. The water is a long way from the villages, as there is never any on the hills where they are built. We frequently saw the women, in the heat of the day, carrying these baskets, filled with water, back to their huts; each woman carried two, fastened one at each end of a pole by means of

cord made of the fibre of the *dhoum*-palm. The village of Mai Daro was at some distance from the Gash, and we never visited it; I took a walk, however, up a hill at the back of our camp, and found the remains of a small village lately burned. All that part of the country had suffered much from fire, it being impossible rightly to determine whether occasioned by accident or design.

On the top of a hill not far off, was a deserted village, having evidently been abandoned in a hurry; very likely the inhabitants had been driven away by the people of a neighbouring town, as the Basé are any thing but a united people, and are constantly quarrelling among themselves. Most of the huts were placed in small enclosures made of the dried stalks of the *dhurra*. In the dwellings we found cooking-pots, gourds for drinking, and roughly made wooden bedsteads; our men appropriated some of the cooking-utensils for their own use. In one house was a huge earthenware jar, resembling one of the celebrated jars in the old story of Ali Baba, or the Forty Thieves; it had probably been used as a receptacle for grain, most likely *dhurra*. Terraces, looking quite like those built for the vines in France and Italy, were to be seen on the side of the hill on which this cereal had been grown.

In the evening the sheik of Mai Daro arrived in camp; and we went through the ceremony of making *amān*, or peace, with him and his people. We had done the same before at Koolookoo with our friend Longay, the sheik's son. It consisted in the sheik placing his naked sword on the ground, and drawing his foot along it, the blade passing between his bare foot and his sandal; after which, he placed the palm of his hand on his sword, and uttered some cabalistic words indicative of peace and good-will towards us all.

The women gradually became quite confiding, and displayed that passion for admiration and attention common to the sex over both the civilised and uncivilised world. Numbers came to have their photographs taken by my brother, and were greatly delighted when we noticed their beads. Both men and women greatly appreciated the red tinsel capsules we had on some claret bottles: the men in particular greatly affected these as ornaments, — some beating them into a square shape, and hanging them round their necks, while others tipped the ends of the wooden skewers which all the men wear in their hair with the bright-coloured bauble.

We again proposed the magic-lantern; and this time a number came to the entertainment, with which they seemed to be greatly delighted.

Our next camping-ground was about ten miles farther up the river's bed, on a burnt patch of ground between some high grass and the Gash. The natives declared we had reached the Mareb, of which they had been talking for days. The Gash and Mareb are one and the same thing. The Arabs of the Soudan call it the Gash; the Abyssinians, the Mareb; and the Basé, the Sonah. It rises in Abyssinia, and flows only during the rains; even then, although a very broad and swiftly flowing river, none of its waters reach the sea, being lost in the sands of the desert. The Arabs have the vaguest ideas of geography, and know next to nothing of the countries immediately surrounding the places where they are living themselves. For a long time all the men we had with us, if they offered an opinion at all, insisted that the Mareb and Gash were perfectly distinct and different water-courses: they were, however, at last forced to acknowledge them to be one and the same. They also declared that we should find that the Mareb was a flowing river; instead of which, all the water has

to be obtained by digging, unless a small quantity appears above the level of the bed. I do not think that during the dry season it flows even far up in Abyssinia, although the water there, no doubt, appears more frequently on the surface.

The country improved in appearance as we travelled on, and gave more promise of game; there were not nearly so many *dhoum*-palms, and the trees fringing the river's bank were often of an immense size and in full leaf, affording the most perfect shade; then, again, these trees would disappear for a time, and give place to acres of very high, thick grass.

On Feb. 4, while on the march, we saw our first buffaloes; we came upon them suddenly while riding in the river's bed. They were in the tall grass, and the first intimation we received of their whereabouts was hearing a great stampede as they rushed out into the river's bed and across to the other side, where they again disappeared into thick covert. There were three of them, and Aylmer and my brother William started in pursuit. They had not been gone for more than an hour when we saw a fine bull buffalo cross over about two hundred yards in front of us. Two of our party eagerly started after him, and one of them got a snap shot in very thick covert at about seventy yards; he went crashing through the jungle, and, though they followed his footprints for some distance, they saw no more of him. The others were not so fortunate as to see any-thing of their buffaloes, though they only gave up the chase when twilight made it necessary to seek the camp. Probably the single bull that was fired at was one of the three buffaloes we had seen crossing the river's bed together. The same day I killed a poisonous snake about four feet long: this was the first we had seen. We never came across any tree-snakes: the previous winter, we had found them not uncommon, and the natives declared them to be very venomous.

During the night some of us were awakened by a great noise in the grass near our tents. Colvin and Aylmer jumped out of bed, and, hastily seizing their rifles, went to see what was causing the disturbance. Unfortunately it was not a very bright night, the moon being partly obscured by clouds. Suddenly they came upon a herd of about thirty buffaloes, drinking at a small pool of stagnant water; the beasts either saw or heard them, and went off with a great noise through the grass, fortunately for them in the opposite direction from that in which they were approaching. Both fired as they galloped off, but it was impossible in the semi-darkness for them to do more than fire at the black mass; as they neither saw nor heard any fall, they could not tell whether they might claim the first buffalo. Early the next morning they started off to see if they could discover anything further of them; and did not return to camp until nine P.M., having enjoyed an excellent day's sport. They had not long left the camp before they found the blood tracks of a buffalo they had wounded during the night. After following these for some distance, all the way through high grass, they came to a slight eminence, up which they climbed, and, gaining the summit, saw the buffalo moving slowly along the margin of the grass. Aylmer obtained a snap shot at about a hundred yards, with the result of driving the animal farther into the grass, where Salee, who had climbed to the top of a tree, declared he saw it lie down. Step by step they cautiously advanced to the edge of the grass, sending Salee round to endeavour, by throwing stones and clods of earth, to drive the buffalo toward them; this was, however, of no avail, and, thinking it possible that it was already *hors de combat*, they gingerly entered the covert, which in that part was sufficiently thin to allow of their seeing some six or seven yards ahead.

They had not proceeded many yards when a crash, accompanied by a warning shout from Salee, was heard; and turning quickly round they espied the buffalo making for, and almost on the top of them. A well-directed shot from Colvin brought the infuriated beast on to its head: it quickly struggled to its feet, however, and endeavoured to charge again, but feebly; and another bullet soon administered the *coup-de-grâce*. Unfortunately it proved to be a female; the shot fired the previous night had only wounded her in the hind-quarters. The breath was hardly out of her body when the Basé, who, like vultures, had been watching the contest from afar, flocked to the scene. Words fail to convey an adequate sense of the filthy spectacle that then took place. No sooner had the head been removed, and the body abandoned to them, than with yells and shouts they precipitated themselves upon the carcase, struggling for the possession of what they looked upon as titbits. All was fish that came to their net, entrails and every abomination included; and no pack of jackals or hyænas ever left a cleaner skeleton. Entrails, and all parts that could not conveniently be transported, were devoured raw on the spot; and their black hides were soon dyed in gore, as they wallowed in the horrible mess.

In the afternoon Colvin and Aylmer each shot a buck *méhédehet*, or water-buck (*Redunca Ellipsiprymna*), a very fine species of antelope, which we had never seen before. They have red hair, much like red deer, and fine annulated horns, and are very plucky beasts. One of them, when wounded, tried to charge Colvin when he approached it: he had shot it at about two hundred yards range, having hit it rather far back.

Two days later a dead cow buffalo was discovered, that had been shot on the night of the 4th. It was found near the back

of the camp, close to a small pool of water; and, although in an absolutely putrid condition, the Basé ate it with relish, regardless of the fact that they had plenty of freshly killed meat in camp at the time. With such a crowd of natives about as we had, it soon becomes desirable to shift one's quarters: scraps of meat are carelessly thrown about anywhere, and the trees are soon festooned with strips of meat drying in the sun. The stench caused by quantities of half-putrid meat about the camp can more easily be imagined than described; it is, moreover, apt to breed fever and dysentery.

More Basé arrived, and joined our camp, and we began to think it was possible to have too much of a good thing; we had again to explain to them, that, while we should gladly do our best to supply them with meat, yet we could not promise to do so, as our own party was so large without taking into account the Basé; we could say no more when they urged that if there was no meat they would be perfectly satisfied with the fruit of the *dhoum*-palm and baobab-tree. They certainly added to the picturesqueness of the camp; we made them keep outside our *zariba*, and they slept in the river's bed, each man planting his spear in the sand, which, as they usually placed them all near together, had a very odd effect. Sometimes we had as many as two hundred of them, then there appeared quite a forest of spears. As they wore scarcely any clothing, and the nights were very cold, they were in the habit of lighting a great number of fires, which they placed very close together, each fire serving for two or three men. When well supplied with meat, they became very merry, and ardent votaries of Terpsichore; and what their dances lacked in grace, they more than made up for by the wildness and picturesqueness which they added to the scene. Some of them began to make themselves useful as well as ornamental, fetching fire-wood for the cook, and carrying

our water-barrels down to the wells we had dug in the Mareb, filling them and taking them back to camp; in fact, we became the best of friends.

On the same day that Colvin shot the buffalo, William and I had a most exciting stalk after an ostrich. It was a fine black cock, and none of us had ever seen one of these birds in its wild state before. We had gone a long way from the Mareb; and on ascending a small hill, in order to get a good view of the surrounding country, we suddenly discovered the ostrich. It is at all times an exceedingly difficult bird to approach, generally keeping to the open, and being always on the look-out for danger. The ostrich is supposed by the natives to be deficient in the senses of hearing and smelling, but to have abnormal powers of sight. The one we saw was by no means an exception to the rule; it was marching about in a great open plain, covered with very fine dried grass not more than two feet high. To stalk it was next to impossible, owing to the almost total absence of covert; however, we were most anxious to do our best, an ostrich being a prize one did not get the chance of obtaining every day.

For two mortal hours we crouched and crawled, and wriggled ourselves along the grass like eels, during the very hottest part of a roasting-hot day; once or twice we stopped to rest for a few moments under a *hegleek*-tree. There was only an odd tree or two in the grass, which we kept endeavouring to make use of as screens between ourselves and the ostrich. On crawling near the tree in hopes of finding the game within shot on the far side, we discovered that we were no nearer to the object of our pursuit, as the ostrich had walked on all the time, and was probably farther than ever from us. At last, finding it hopeless to get at it in the open, we endeavoured to drive it towards a clump of trees to our left; all to no purpose, as it was well on

the alert, and would never let us get nearer than four hundred yards. And so we never even fired at it.

I don't think I was ever so hot in my life. My clothes were literally saturated with perspiration; I sat under the shade of a tree, while I took off my things, and dried them in the sun. We never felt any ill effects from the heat, although constantly taking violent exercise during the hottest hours of the day; in fact, we were always better when camping out, shooting in the wilds, than when stopping in towns where there was very little inducement to take exercise. Taking plenty of exercise is the only way to keep well in a very hot climate. Although we never feared the sun, we always treated it with proper respect; our pith helmets were the very thickest that could be bought; mine, an immensely thick one, I had got four years previously at Benares, served me for two winters in the Soudan. We wore besides, down our spines, thick pads made of cotton-wadding quilted, a good inch or more thick; these were buttoned into our coats.

The days were intensely hot, and very dry. I have seen as many as thirty-five degrees difference between the wet and dry bulb; for some hours every day the thermometer would range from 85° to 95° in the shade, usually nearer the latter than the former temperature. I had a thermometer made expressly by Casella of Holborn, for testing the heat of the sun's rays, which, like all my thermometers, had been corrected at Kew; and I have seen it rise during the day to 164° Fahrenheit, the usual maximum being from 150° to 158°. The nights were very cold, especially in the early mornings. After dinner, in the Mareb, we frequently liked to sit round a blazing fire. About dawn I have seen the thermometer go down to 37°, and night after night it would descend to 42° or 50°. We found these cold nights most agreeable, bracing us up as they did to endure the heat of

the day. The dews were frequently so heavy that the ground in the morning would be as wet as though it had been raining heavily; it was impossible to know when to expect them, as the night after one, and in the same place, it would perhaps be quite dry.

On our return to camp I saw some *tétél*, and missed one very badly. This was the only shot either of us fired all day. We saw the fresh tracks of more than one rhinoceros, an animal none of us had ever encountered. A great addition to the *cuisine* was made by Ali our cook, in the shape of wild tomatoes, which he found growing near the Mareb; they were small, but of good flavour. Ali had travelled formerly along that part of the Mareb which runs through Abyssinia, where he said there was any quantity; and he had been on the look-out for them for days.

One day when Aylmer and Colvin were out shooting, they came across a most saddening sight. Late in the afternoon they had shot a couple of antelopes, one of which they had left in the bush whilst engaged in cutting up the other. On returning to the first one, they discovered one of the most loathsome specimens of suffering humanity it had ever been their lot to witness; a bent and decrepit old man, wasted with disease, and covered with the most hideous sores, was busily employed in gorging himself upon the antelope's entrails. He proved to be a leper, who had been ostracised by his tribe on account of his disease. How he kept body and soul together, it was impossible to divine. The Basé who were with them expressed the utmost fear of approaching him, and were horrified at Colvin for daring to tender him a more tempting portion of the animal.

We spent two more days in shooting, before shifting our camp. There was, evidently, plenty of game; but owing to the

immense quantity of high grass, it was often difficult to get at it. The only species of big game of which we were astonished to find a scarcity, was the lion; we had neither heard nor seen any since leaving Toadelook, and had, moreover, come across hardly any of their tracks. Giraffes we had seen tolerably often, but had shot only one; and, as long as other meat was plentiful, we were not very anxious to kill any more. One day during the march, while halting under a tree, we had allowed the caravan to get ahead of us; and two or three ran across the river's bed, just ahead of the camels.

CHAPTER XIII.

Aylmer and I start for Ma Ambasah, and find Water. — A Chase after Buffaloes. — Conical *versus* Spherical Bullets. — A Nasty Recoil. — A Visit from Sheik Kudul. — He departs, promising to return. — The Camp moves to Ma Ambasah. — Two Bull Buffaloes killed. — Some of the Camel-drivers sent to Amedeb for *Dhurra*.

One morning Aylmer and I started off for a *khor* called Ma Ambasah, where there was said to be a good deal of water; it ran into the right bank of the Mareb, about eight or ten miles above our camp. On our way there we each shot a *tétél*, after one of which we had a long chase before finally securing him; these we shot soon after leaving camp, so we sent them back on one of the two camels we had taken with us for the purpose of carrying game.

On arriving at Khor Ma Ambasah, we found, that, although there were no large pools of water such as we had been led to expect, still a good deal of water filtered up through the sand in several places.

There were plenty of very fresh tracks of buffaloes in the sandy *khor*, and these animals had dug holes in the sand in order more easily to obtain a supply of water to drink.

We had struck this *khor* at its junction with the Mareb, which we had followed up to this point; and, after having gone about a mile up its bed from this junction, we set off to shoot our way back to camp, intending to cut off the angle formed by the junction of the two *khors*. We had only just started, and

one of our men had run on ahead to the top of a small knoll on our left, to look out for game, when we saw him frantically gesticulating to us to follow him; this we did at our best pace, and found some buffaloes crossing the rising ground about fifty yards off, separated from us by a narrow ravine. We each singled out one, and fired; mine fell immediately to the shot, but Aylmer's, though hard hit, went on.

Hearing the report of the shots, some dozen or more buffaloes that had been hidden from us by the trees, rushed past; we fired at them, but with no result, as far as we could see at the time. The buffalo I had shot, which was unfortunately a cow, though a very large one, was nearly done for, and could not rise; so I put an end to her sufferings by a ball in the neck. Then we lost no time in starting off to see what had become of Aylmer's wounded beast; there was no difficulty in finding a very distinct blood-track, and on following it up for about a hundred yards we came across another cow, this time stone dead.

It is all very well to talk about singling out the bulls, but it is by no means an easy thing to do. Sometimes one comes across single buffaloes that have separated themselves from the herd. These are sure to be bulls, and very savage bulls too. In meeting with a herd, all that you can see, as a rule, is a number of buffaloes, glimpses of which you catch between the trees; for you are far more likely to find them in pretty thick covert than in open country. You fire at what you imagine to be a bull, and the leader of the herd. At your shot three or four more buffaloes that were in front, hidden by the bushes, rush out; and you discover, to your annoyance, that you have only fired at a cow.

I had been nearly deafened by the report of my rifle, as well as almost knocked down. For the first time I had tried the effect of conical instead of spherical bullets (which I had

hitherto been using) in my ten-bore rifle; although this rifle was supposed to be made to shoot both, the locks were probably not strong enough, as the concussion caused by firing the right barrel was so great that the left one went off simply from the jar produced. The effect of firing from one's shoulder fourteen drachms of powder and a good six ounces of lead was by no means an agreeable experience; and, had a buffalo charged me, I should have been in a decidedly awkward predicament. The recoil was so great, that it had fairly spun me round like a teetotum, and my hat had been sent flying. The conical bullets are far heavier than the spherical. Exactly the same accident happened to my brother Arthur's rifle a few days later, and from the same cause; we decided that in future we would content ourselves with spherical bullets, although the rifle should certainly have been able to shoot both.

It was long after dark by the time we got back to camp, and we found all the others had returned before us. Lort Phillips and Colvin, who had been out together, had seen a good many buffaloes, but had not succeeded in bagging any. Salee, who had been with them, came across a rhinoceros in high grass, which was, however, of such extent and thickness, that it was impossible for them to get near it. In following game into high grass, the utmost that can be done is to have a snap-shot at an animal making off, alarmed by the noise of approaching footsteps; and, oftener than not, it is heard running away without being seen, although it may perhaps be within two or three yards of one's rifle.

Neither of my brothers shot any thing that day, though they saw buffaloes, ostriches, and two giraffes, and they might have shot *tétél* or *nellut*, had they wished to do so; but it frequently happened that we felt obliged to abstain from shooting antelopes, for fear that by so doing we should lose a chance at bigger

game. There were, in fact, no days after we were once fairly in the game country, on which we could not have shot antelope, of one kind or another, if desirous of doing so; and there were such numbers of natives about our camp that we felt we could shoot a great deal, and yet that no meat would be wasted.

A very bad piece of luck happened to us that same day. While we were all out in different directions, shooting, two elephants passed within sight of the camp; they were first seen by some of our servants, who pointed them out to the doctor. He did not shoot, but walked out some distance from camp, so as to get a good view of them. The next day some of us took up their tracks; and after going a very long way, and seeing nothing of them, gave it up, and returned to camp.

A country may fairly lay claim to being considered a gamey one, where elephants, rhinoceri, buffaloes, giraffes, and ostriches are all seen on the same day, and where, in addition, are found seven or eight varieties of antelopes, wild boars (or rather wart-hogs), to say nothing of lions and panthers, which, though scarce in that particular part at the time of our visit, were nevertheless to be occasionally found. As for birds, there were swarms of guinea-fowl, partridges, pigeons, and doves, and many birds of brilliant plumage, if any one cared to collect them. Only once did any of us obtain shots at ostriches, and then at such tremendously long ranges, that it was, practically speaking, almost useless to fire. They invariably kept to the open, and were so extremely wary that we could never approach unperceived.

The following day my brother William had a shot at a wart-hog with a fine pair of tusks, one of four he came across in the bed of the Mareb; unluckily he missed it, so we had no pork for dinner that day. I must say it was no great disappoint-

ment to me, as the flesh of the wart-hog, though eatable when you can get nothing better, is not a thing to yearn after.

On the 7th, the day before we shifted our camp to Ma Ambasah, which was destined to be our farthest camp in an eastward direction, we had a visit from a peculiarly villanous-looking Basé sheik, rejoicing in the name of Kudul. We were informed that he was the most powerful sheik in those parts, and that it would be politic to propitiate him with some more valuable gift than any we had heretofore bestowed. Accordingly, from a box that we designated "the present-box," because it was full of things we had brought to distribute among the natives, we unearthed a very handsome *abba*, or cloak, of blue silk, with a great deal of gold thread worked upon it, which we had bought in the Cairo bazaars, and invested him with it. The ceremony took place in the presence of a great crowd of his people; and, although perhaps not so important an investiture as that of the Garter with us in England, it was, nevertheless, a very grand and solemn affair. Round his head we twisted a gaudy silk *kufeeyeh* of many colours, and wound a magenta *Cumberbund* round his waist.

He was greatly delighted with his appearance as displayed in a looking-glass we gave him. It was most decidedly startling! I fear our gorgeous gifts would very soon become shabby, or covered with grease from the amount of fat he was in the habit of putting on his head; then, too, most likely he would become not only an object of admiration, but of envy, to his Abyssinian neighbours; and some of the more powerful chiefs among them would, doubtless, very soon deprive him of our gifts.

He informed us, that, when he first heard of our travelling in his country, he thought we must be Turks, come with Sheik Said Carcashi (the powerful Basé sheik who is under the thumb

of the Egyptian Government, and lives near Amedeb), in order to take possession of the country. Had that been our intention, he frankly informed us he had made up his mind to obtain the assistance of some Abyssinians, with whom he said he was on friendly terms, in order to repel us. It was not until he had almost arrived in our camp, —at least, so he said, — that he had learned who we really were, and our object in visiting that part of the country. Previously to our presenting him with these things, he had gone through the regular *amān* ceremony, to which we had become so accustomed of late.

The only sign of his exalted rank, that he displayed on first coming amongst us, consisted of a singularly dirty and very gaudy red-cotton handkerchief, that he wore twisted round his head, and a kind of dressing-gown of the same material. We questioned him about the Basé dwelling on the Settite; and he declared that he had nothing to do with them, but that we could go among them if we wished to do so. He did not, however, appear to know any thing of that part of the country, and made us no offer of guides; nor did he make any suggestions as to how we were to get there.

The day after the "investiture," Sheik Kudul took his departure, comforting us at the same time with the promise of the pleasure of his company again in two days' time. As far as his appearance went, I never saw any one with a more villanous cast of countenance, nor one I should be more loath to trust.

On the 8th, we moved to Khor Ma Ambasah, close to where Aylmer and I had shot the buffaloes; and a prettier camp we never selected. Our tents were pitched some three or four miles from its junction with the Mareb, and above its sandy bed, in a place where numbers of lofty trees afforded us plenty of shelter from the sun, and where a kind of natural arbours

were formed by the bushes, in one of which we placed our table. The trees and bushes were of many different kinds, and in full leaf, and so thick that no part of the camp was exposed to the sun for very long at a time. As I have already mentioned, this camp was destined to be our farthest in that direction; this, and the place we had last left, showed more signs of game than we had found anywhere else, nor did we subsequently find any part of the country in which the chances of good sport promised so well. It was most unfortunate that circumstances soon made it advisable for us to retrace our steps; otherwise, if we had been able to remain longer on Khor Ma Ambasah, and could have penetrated rather farther into the country, we should doubtless have obtained a far better bag than we did. As it was, we spent three clear days there.

On one of these days we secured two fine bull buffaloes, one of them shot by Lort Phillips and my brother William, who were out together, and the other one had been wounded either by Aylmer or myself, on the afternoon of the 6th, when we each bagged a cow. Arthur and I were out together, and had not gone far from camp in the direction of the Mareb, when we heard a low moan in the tall grass that bordered the *khor*. We could not tell whether it proceeded from a buffalo or a rhinoceros, and were unable to get into the high grass to determine. We first climbed up the bank on the opposite side of the *khor* to that from which we heard the noise, and threw clods of earth and stones, in order to try and drive the animal, whatever it was, out; but all to no purpose. After a time we crossed the *khor*, and made our way to the other side of the border of grass, which at that place was narrow. As nothing would dislodge the animal, we felt sure it must be a wounded buffalo; and, with our rifles at full cock, we managed to push ourselves a little way in, but not until we had again thrown

stones to see if we could drive the brute out. A native who was with us declared he could see the animal's head, which he pointed out to my brother. He fired: result, a movement, and another groan. It proved to be a huge bull that had been badly wounded four days previously, and had retreated to the high grass, where he was lying in a sort of hole. He had only one horn, the other having been either worn off, or possibly lost in fighting; oddly enough, too, he was possessed of only one eye. These were the last buffaloes we shot on either the Mareb or Ma Ambasah, although we saw a good many, and fired one or two unsuccessful shots at them. Rhinoceros marks were getting quite common. These animals appeared to keep to thick covert during the day, and at night to go down to the *khor* to drink. Unfortunately there was no moon at the time, so that it was useless to watch for them at any of these drinking-places. Beside the grass there were numbers of *nebbuk*-bushes growing so thickly that it was often impossible to penetrate them. I have no doubt we often passed close by rhinoceri without being aware of their proximity.

One day two of our party went several miles farther up the Mareb, in the direction of Abyssinia, where they ascended a hill, from whence they obtained a good bird's-eye view of the country for some miles round. They reported that the mountains came down to the river's bed, which was fringed with *dhoum*-palms, but that the high grass decreased very much in quantity farther up the Mareb. They saw very little game, but came across a great many Basé.

The natives told us that the Basé villages extended about a day's or a day and a half's journey in that direction, from the junction of the two *khors*, and then came Abyssinia. Probably their villages ceased about ten or fifteen miles off, and between these villages and Abyssinia lay a neutral piece of

ground, upon which neither Basé nor Abyssinian dare live for fear of each other.

As we were running short of *dhurra*, and found that, contrary to what we had been led to expect when leaving Haikota, it was a very scarce commodity in the Basé country, it became a very important question to decide what was to be done in order to replenish our supply. Our native servants depended greatly upon it for food; and it was, moreover, an absolute essential for our horses. After some difficulty, and on promising a handsome *baksheesh*, we found some of the more intrepid among our camel-drivers willing to go with their camels to the Egyptian frontier town of Amedeb to purchase some. Besides *dhurra*, we told them to bring back some cotton cloth to distribute among the Basé. There was nothing we found they prized so much; for, as they were at constant loggerheads with the Egyptians, it was almost impossible for them to procure it. They started on their journey on the afternoon of Feb. 10.

CHAPTER XIV.

Disastrous Adventure with Abyssinians. — Akabah brings the Alarm. — Two of our Party surprised by a Hundred armed Abyssinians. — Making Friends. — Treachery of the Abyssinians. — Mahomet fearfully wounded. — The Search for him. — The Dembelas Tribe. — Contemplated Expedition against the Dembelas abandoned.

On the 11th a most disastrous event occurred, and one which materially affected the remaining portion of our expedition. We had so far got on very well, and had had no serious drawbacks to the success of our journey, with the exception of poor Jules' death at Cassala. We had found our camp at Ma Ambasah the most picturesque and agreeable that we had yet formed; and it promised to be most successful headquarters, from which to start in pursuit of game. No Europeans had been there before us. The Basé were entirely unarmed, with the exception of their spears and shields; and it was sufficiently far from the headquarters of the Beni-Amer tribe on the west, and the Abyssinians on the east, to have allowed the game to remain almost undisturbed.

Although it was only a small tract of country that enjoyed these advantages to the sportsman, they were advantages fully appreciated by us, who knew from the experience of two former winters the great difficulty of finding, in this part of Africa, territory containing an abundance of game, — of the larger game, I mean, antelopes being numerous in many other parts. A few years ago elephants and rhinoceri were plentiful in places that

the former now visit only at rare and uncertain intervals, and where the presence of the latter is a thing entirely of the past. At Ma Ambasah there were plentiful marks of rhinoceri, and elephants not infrequently visited the neighbourhood.

It was our custom to draw for pairs to go out shooting, and we had done so, as usual, on this occasion. Lort Phillips and Aylmer had drawn together. I was to go with Colvin; and my brothers decided on remaining in camp for the purpose of making observations, and taking photographs. We also drew for trackers; Colvin and I got Salee, while the others took Mahomet, an excellent man whom we had engaged at Cassala.

We started up the dry river's bed, and saw numerous tracks of rhinoceri. One or two of these animals had evidently been drinking, during the night, at some pools of water we came across; during the daytime they usually retire to the thick grass and almost impenetrable jungle that grows so thickly in this part of the country, and where they are almost un-get-at-able. On the Settite there is none of this grass; and, although it is much affected by the larger animals, their pursuit is rendered much more difficult where it abounds. One feels constantly sure of the presence of big game, when it is impossible to see it.

A number of Basé had accompanied us, eager for meat; and we found it very difficult to keep them back. We had been on the fresh tracks of a large bull buffalo for some time, but, owing to the chattering of these fellows, we could not get near it, and at last, in despair, sat down, and refused to proceed farther till all but three or four had set their faces in the direction of the camp; and we insisted that those we allowed with us should keep a long way in our rear, which with great difficulty we persuaded them to do.

I had caught a glimpse of a buffalo on the bank to our right, which had seen us and made off; and we had been following him for some time, when suddenly there appeared, running towards us, a Basé named Akabah (in their language, "the buffalo"), who we knew had that morning accompanied the other party. His face was torn, and his legs bleeding, from the thorns he had encountered in his flight. He called out to us, "*El Makadah, el Makadah!*" ("The Abyssinians!"), and made for the direction of the camp. Presently five or six more appeared; but we did not think anything of it, well knowing what cowards the much-feared Basé really are, and feeling sure that it was only necessary for them to see, or imagine they saw, some Abyssinian, on the top of a hill, for them to bolt at once, without waiting to see whether their intentions were hostile or not. At this time no one was with us except Salee, as we had left the rest of the natives in the river's bed with our horses, and a camel we had taken with us to carry meat, should we shoot anything.

We continued tracking the buffalo, but at last gave it up, as we could see by its marks on the ground that it had several times been frightened, doubtless by the flying Basé, and gone off at a gallop. Accordingly we made for a shady spot, and discussed our luncheon, and, that ceremony over, crossed the bed of the river, and looked for fresh tracks on the other side. We had not proceeded far when we espied Mahomet Salee and Bayrumphy galloping along on the opposite side; so we crossed over to them to see what was the matter. As soon as they perceived us approaching, they shouted to us, in a tremendous state of excitement, to return to the camp immediately, as the Makadah had attacked the other party. On joining them, we learned that Aylmer and Lort Phillips had been surprised by a large party of Abyssinians, who had taken their

rifles and a horse; and, worse than all, that Mahomet had been speared, and was left behind dangerously wounded.

We made all haste to the camp, where we found every one in a high state of excitement, and dreadfully anxious about us, as they knew we had gone in much the same direction that the others had taken when they were attacked. They were engaged in strengthening the *zariba*, and had fired the grass on the other side of the river's bed, opposite the camp; as, in case of an attack, it would have been a grand shelter for our assailants. They had, moreover, dealt out all spare guns and rifles to those of our servants whom they imagined most competent to use them. I fancy, however, that, if any thing had happened, they would most of them have been just as likely, perhaps even more so, to shoot some of us or themselves, as to do any damage to the hostile natives.

We were, of course, most eager to hear full particulars of what had occurred, and were not long in hearing the whole story. Lort Phillips and Aylmer had proceeded some eight or nine miles up the dry bed of Khor Ma Ambasah, and were making for a mountain called Gala, which rose on the west bank of the *khor*, and at the foot of which there were said to be some pools of water at which rhinoceri, buffaloes, and other animals were in the habit of drinking. They had nearly reached Gala, and were riding in the sandy bed of the *khor*, keeping a sharp look-out for game, and feeling pretty sure that they would come across some either going to drink, or returning from the water; when, on turning a bend, they saw first one and then another man run across, while a third, in a baobab-tree, was gathering fruit.

The Basé who were with them, without looking farther, immediately turned tail, and fled. They had evinced no fear when starting from camp, and had said nothing about the Abyssinians;

so that Lort Phillips and Aylmer were at first at a loss to account for their sudden consternation. These were the Basé that Colvin and I had encountered flying in the direction of the camp. After going a few steps farther, they saw about a hundred men armed with spears, as all are in these countries, sitting under an overhanging rock, beside a well they had dug in the sand. On seeing Lort Phillips and Aylmer, they ran towards them. Achmet, our head horse-boy, whom we had engaged at Souakim, shouted, "*Edroop, edroop!*" ("Fire, fire!"); and it is a pity they did not act upon his advice, as there is little doubt that the enemy would have fled immediately if they had only fired a shot or two over their heads; it would have been quite enough to scare them away, without the necessity of firing *at* them. Mahomet, however, who had been in the country before (Achmet had not), and whose opinion might consequently be considered to have more weight than Achmet's, begged them not to do so, and urged them to make *amān*, or friends.

We had of late frequently heard the word *amān* applied to ridiculous ceremonies performed by the sheiks of various Basé villages through which we had passed, and which were supposed to have the effect of making us friends forever with those with whom they had taken place; and Sheik Kudul had informed us that he was friends with the Abyssinians; so that Aylmer and Lort Phillips imagined they would only have to go through the same performance again, to make them sworn allies.

Accordingly, acting on Mahomet's advice, they dismounted when the Abyssinians got up to them; Mahomet and Achmet then placed the spare rifles they were carrying on the ground, and motioned Lort Phillips and Aylmer to do the same, in order to show that they were peaceably inclined. The Abyssinians

(who afterwards proved to be of the Dembelas tribe, a semi-independent people, living on the north-western frontier of Abyssinia, and whom I shall hereafter distinguish as Dembelas) commenced by kissing their hands, and making every demonstration of friendship. Suddenly, however, they fell helter-skelter, one on top of the other, upon the rifles. Mahomet, Achmet, and the other three or four natives who were with them, on perceiving the tables thus unexpectedly turned, thought it was a case of *sauve qui peut*, and made off as fast as their legs would carry them. The Dembelas fought with each other for the possession of the much-prized rifles; and one or two made a rush for Lort Phillips's horse, which Eu-Noor, who usually looked after it, was holding. They stripped Eu-Noor, moreover, of Lort Phillips's revolver, which he had unfortunately given him to carry early in the day, and which was fastened to a strap he wore round his waist.

Aylmer had his revolver in his hand, and drew it, intending to shoot a man who was trying to obtain possession of his horse; but, for some reason or other, it would not go off, — a fortunate circumstance for him, I should think; as, at the time he tried to use it, the Dembelas had, ten to one, the best of it. They managed, however, before the natives made off with the booty, to recover Lort Phillips's ten-bore rifle and Aylmer's horse, which they were also making off with. Hardly had they done so, when Lort Phillips gave a view-halloo. This (to them) unearthly noise had a magical effect; they took to their heels up the hills that bordered the *khor*, as fast as they could go; while Aylmer and Lort Phillips made the best of their way towards camp, with the ten-bore rifle and one horse, having lost a .500 and a .450 express rifle, an eight-bore, a revolver, and a horse.

After going some distance on their return to camp, they en-

countered the native servants who had run away; and from them they learned, to their horror, that Mahomet had been fearfully wounded in the stomach by a spear, and had been left behind. As far as we could gather, after having started to run away, he looked back, and, observing their struggle to regain possession of their rifles, turned round to render them assistance, and was speared. The boy in charge of the camel took his hand, and helped him for a short distance; but Mahomet, feeling he was hard hit, told him he was dying, and could go no farther, and urged him to look to his own safety.

One of the Dembelas threw a spear at him; which, happily, missed him, but killed the camel. They stripped the animal of the saddle-bags, containing luncheon and about thirty or forty cartridges. These cartridges, however, would not have been much to divide between three rifles of different calibres. One of the horsemen with them, whom we had brought from Haikota, they robbed of his horse, and, having soundly thrashed him with the back of his own sword, took it away. He was an old man, and greatly distressed at the indignity that had been offered him; and he quite thought we should consider the loss of his sword as the most important of the whole affray.

As soon as Colvin and I arrived in camp, we all resolved to lose no time in going out to search for poor Mahomet, or his body in case he were dead, — a contingency that seemed only too probable, judging from the fearful description we had from the camel-boy of the manner in which he was wounded. We decided that this boy should be of the party, as we trusted to him to show us where he had left Mahomet. As it was impossible to leave our two European servants (who were in a state of great terror), or the camp, alone, we drew lots for four, with the doctor, to go in search of Mahomet, and for the other two

to remain in camp. Colvin and my brother William were the two who remained behind. It was four o'clock before we started, and we did not get back till after nine. Although we made all possible haste, it was almost dusk before we arrived at the spot where the boy stated he had last seen him. We searched everywhere, until darkness compelled us to desist. But we could find no trace of him, and all we saw were some thirty or forty huge vultures, sitting together on the palm-trees; and the sickening fear came over us, that he was dead, and that these birds, which in Africa so often act as sextons, had already devoured his remains. This seemed but too probable; for, in these parts of Africa, it is usually only a matter of a few minutes, or even seconds, for these birds to collect, after one has shot an antelope or any other kind of game.

I remember, the first time I travelled in the Soudan, shooting two ariel, which fell not over a hundred, or a hundred and fifty, yards apart; and yet although, when I shot them, I could see no vultures about, by the time I had secured the head of one, and had come up to the other, its head was already destroyed by the vultures, which had commenced to devour it. When we shot more than one animal at a time, we always sent some one to keep the vultures off one, while the men were engaged in cutting up the other.

On our return to camp there was a great discussion among our men, as to whether the people who had plundered us were Tigré Abyssinians or Dembelas. We ourselves felt almost sure at the time, from the direction in which they came, that they were Dembelas; and we afterwards established the fact. I do not think that the attack was premeditated. In all this part of Africa, there is a considerable tract of country which divides each tribe, and which it is difficult to assign to either, both of them being afraid to inhabit it.

At our camp on Khor Ma Ambasah, we were, so to speak, wedged in between three tribes,—the Basé, the Tigré Abyssinians, and the Dembelas; and none of these would go there unless in considerable numbers. The people we had encountered had some boys and three or four women with them, as well as goats and three mules; and it is not likely they would have taken such *impedimenta* with them, had they started with hostile intent. They travelled a strong party, to be prepared for hostilities with their enemies the Basé; and their object in going where they did was probably to search for honey, which is plentiful in the baobab-trees, and for the fruit of the baobab-tree itself; and they were, moreover, most likely furnished with traps to catch antelopes. The country, being uninhabited, would be favourable for their purpose. Seeing white men, they doubtless took them for Turks, and thought they could not do better than try to possess themselves of their rifles. They are the most lawless and uncivilised of all the Abyssinian tribes,—only nominally paying taxes and owing allegiance to King John. Their country is almost *terra incognita:* the only European that I could ever hear of as having travelled there at all being the Italian traveller, the Marquis Antinori; and he had explored only a small portion of it.

The previous winter we had been on the northern boundary of their country, and had gone into the neutral territory; but not so far as their villages, because we could never find any one of the neighbouring Arabs sufficiently intrepid to accompany us. On our return to England, however, we learned from Capt. Gascoigne of the "Blues," that he had penetrated to several of their villages, with one of their own people whom he had got hold of in some way or another. Although at first they wanted to keep him prisoner, his guide persuaded them to let him return. He found the villages much neater than those of the Arabs, and

that they grew a great deal of millet and *dhurra*. The country was very mountainous, and unsuitable for camels, of which they had none; and he saw very little game. The Dembelas Lort Phillips and Aylmer saw were quite light-coloured, and better clothed than most of the nomad Arabs, and, of course, far more so than the Basé, who are literally nearly naked. They had bare, shaved heads; and one man carried a gun, and actually wore a felt wide-awake hat, with the brim turned down like an Irishman's. It would be curious to know where he got it,—possibly from the Marquis Antinori! They wore no sandals; and this, some of our men declared, was a proof that they were Tigré Abyssinians, as they said they never wore them, and that the Dembelas did.

Some of our men also asserted, that while "*amān*" with the Basé and Arabs meant making friends, or peace, these people understood the word to signify unconditional surrender: "take all we have, only spare our lives." Those of our men who pretended to know any thing of the language of the Dembelas made this statement, and said that it was unfortunate that none of the men with Aylmer and Lort Phillips could speak the language. It is next to impossible to get at the truth in matters of this kind. It is very certain that none of the men with them knew any thing of the "lingo," but I doubt whether any one in the camp did.

Our first impulse was to start off after these people, and we offered Sheik Kudul money for men to go with us; but he would not give us any, and, on second thoughts, we decided that it was impossible to follow them into their mountains. At the least, it would have meant abandoning the baggage to the Basé, who would, of course, have walked off with every thing left behind. This sheik stuck to it, that these people were Tigré Abyssinians; and, as he had previously declared they

were his friends, we began to wonder whether he meant treachery by us himself. Moreover, it looked rather suspicious, that, after having paid us a visit, he had left for two days "on business," and had returned only that very day.

CHAPTER XV.

We leave Ma Ambasah. — Arrival of Mahomet. — Doubts of the Basé. — A Picturesque Scene. — Sport, or Exploration? — The Medicine-Chest. — Death of Mahomet. — Two of the Party start for Amedeb. — Difficulty of keeping Camels. — The "Guffer" Disease. — Dilatoriness of the Arabs. — Poverty of the Basé. — The Barea Tribe.

ALL our servants and camel-drivers declared they would not remain any longer on Khor Ma Ambasah; and we ourselves found it impossible to do so, although we greatly regretted turning our backs on what looked like an excellent locality for sport. Had we attempted to remain, our men would all, or nearly all, have deserted, probably taking the camels with them, and we should have had no means of transport. Accordingly we decided on leaving the next morning.

Very early, and before we had started another party in search of poor Mahomet, we heard a cry that he was coming into camp; and running outside the *zariba*, down to the *khor*, we saw the poor fellow. A more dreadful or pitiable spectacle I never beheld. A fine, healthy-looking fellow when he left the camp the morning before, he was but the wreck of his former self. When I first saw him, he was crouching on his haunches, in the manner of these people when they wish to rest; and his face had become quite drawn and thin. He had taken his sole garment, — some yards of cotton cloth, which he wore ordinarily round his loins and across his shoulders, — to support his entrails, which he further did with his arms. He had been

wounded by a spear in four places, — in two places in the back, one in the arm, and this fearful wound in the abdomen. In this state he had crawled eight miles, from where the attack took place, to our camp. His first words were to ask if Lort Phillips and Aylmer were safe. He told us that we had passed within a few yards of him the previous night; and that, although he plainly saw us, he was too weak to call out for help; he had been lying under a bush at the time, quite close to the camp, unable to proceed farther. The night had been very cold, the thermometer having gone down to 43° Fahrenheit; and his suffering from cold and thirst, added to the fear of being attacked by some wild beast (hyænas especially being very numerous there), must have been something terrible.

We got an *angareb*, and carried him into camp. The doctor did what he could for him, but from the first the case was hopeless. We wanted to give him a little brandy, which he refused to take, it being against his religion. However, we put some in his beef-tea, so that he took it without knowing it. The doctor declared it would make him no worse to carry him on the *angareb;* so we gave orders to strike the camp, and return to our last halting-place, with which order our camel-drivers and servants were delighted.

The only member of our party who did not seem in the least excited by what had occurred was old Ali the cook. Nothing ever ruffled *him*. He was busy with his saucepans when the news of what had happened was first brought into the camp; and, amongst all the din and clatter raised by our numerous camp-servants, he continued calmly and quietly to proceed with his cooking.

We were beginning to have some misgivings with regard to the Basé. Between two and three hundred had attached themselves to us. We felt we could not trust much to Sheik

Kudul; and, although so far we had had no cause of complaint of their attitude towards us, some of them were beginning to show signs of disaffection, and grumbling that they had no more presents made to them. We regretted that we had not brought a camel-load or two of Manchester cloth to distribute amongst them. The small quantity we had brought was much appreciated; and we parcelled it out with great care, the larger portion of course going to the sheiks. Our stock of razors, knives, and scissors, — a large one to begin with, — was rapidly diminishing; and as, of course, we could get no more, we had to be very chary of them. Our only fear of the Basé was, best emboldened by the success of the Dembelas, they should endeavour to surprise us at night. In order to guard ourselves against this possibility, we were very careful to surround our camp with an extra-strong *zariba*, keeping, moreover, fires burning at night in various parts of the camp, and having regular sentries, who were relieved at intervals.

At night the Basé slept all together, immediately outside the *zariba*. Their innumerable small fires flashed upon a forest of spears thrust in the sand around them, occasionally lighting up their dusky forms; while in the centre of the camp our watch-fire illuminated the trees above, the tents around, and the dark background of the jungle, with its tangled creepers festooning the trees, gracefully draped by the faultless hand of nature, — the *tout ensemble* creating an altogether fairy scene.

There is no doubt about it that exploration and sport are two very different things. If the traveller's object is the former, he pushes through the country as best he can, with his purpose — exploration — always in view, trusting to luck and tact to overcome the many inevitable obstacles that will beset his path. If, however, the latter is his main object, he wants to feel pretty free to move where he likes from the camp, and cannot

expect to meet with much success with the game if he is constantly on the look-out for enemies in the people among whom he is travelling. He wants, when he chooses, to wander out alone some distance from the camp, in pursuit of the object that has taken him to the country, and, when away from his goods and chattels, to feel that both they, and his servants and followers, are tolerably safe from a hostile attack. I think, however, that an Englishman, provided he treats the natives well, and pays proper respect to their prejudices, can go almost anywhere. He must, above all, pay particular deference to the chiefs, and let them see that he regards them as important personages, as in their own country they undoubtedly are; at the same time, letting them see that he is a person of consequence himself, and expects to be treated accordingly.

A medicine-chest is often of more use to the traveller than a revolver, for nothing gives an African savage greater pleasure than a good dose of medicine; but it must be a strong one, and rapid in its effects, — none of your half measures with them. A good dose of croton-oil and colicynth, or four or five grains of tartar emetic, is what they like. They hold the European "medicine-man" in great awe and respect. But, although delighting in being physicked internally, they are almost invariably unwilling to submit to the knife. During our first journey in the Soudan, we did more doctoring than on either of our subsequent expeditions. At some places, Cassala, for instance, there were days when as many as two hundred people visited the doctor, who gave away, among other drugs, great quantities of Holloway's pills. These pills we found immensely popular, and we took a good supply with us, in half-pound boxes, on each of our expeditions; and I should never travel in Africa without a good supply.

Mahomet stood the journey very well, and seemed better

AT MAI SARSAH.

when we arrived at our last camp. The doctor had given him some opium, and he travelled easily on the *angareb*. We had induced some Basé to carry him, by promising them some cotton cloth, when the camels we had sent to Amedeb for *dhurra* should return; for we had given the camel-drivers money to purchase some there.

We pitched our camp on the opposite bank of the Mareb from that on which we had previously halted; partly to avoid being near some high grass which grew at the back of our last camp, and in which an enemy could very easily have lain hidden, and partly because, on the opposite bank, there was more material at hand with which to construct a *zariba*.

We made Mahomet as comfortable as we could, by giving him the doctor's tent; and Salee remained with the poor fellow all night. Although he took large doses of opium, he hardly slept at all; he did not, however, complain of pain until the following morning, when mercifully his sufferings were very short, and he died soon after nine o'clock. The Arabs buried him on the same morning, in a grave which they dug at some distance above the Mareb. We gave them some cotton cloth for grave-clothes; and Mahoom stitched them together with the fibre of the *dhoum*-palm leaf, fresh from the tree. The Arabs use this for the purpose when they can get it, in preference to thread, which I suppose they regard as European, and therefore unsuitable. The doctor considered it fortunate that his life had not been prolonged; because, had it been so, he must have suffered terrible agonies, which he was mercifully spared.

After a considerable discussion as to what was to be done next, we decided that Lort Phillips and I should go to Amedeb, to inform the Egyptian authorities of what had happened; the rest of the party waiting for us on the Mareb. There were

two objects in doing this. We felt, that, even in that wild country, the news would probably travel to Amedeb, and we feared that a greatly exaggerated account might reach Cairo, and very possibly get into the English newspapers, and alarm our friends at home; and we were anxious, if possible, to recover our rifles, and thought, that, as they would most probably get into the hands of some Abyssinian sheik, there was a chance that by going to Amedeb we might be able to put ourselves in the way of regaining possession of them. Accordingly, we retraced our steps to Aibaro, where we chose a good position for the camp. On the way, we found very little game; shooting nothing but *tétél* and *oterop* (*Calotragus montanus*), a very small species of gazelle, which is very easily shot, and is very fair eating; we only met with it on the Mareb.

On Feb. 15 Lort Phillips and I started for Amedeb. We decided to bring back more camels if possible. Camels are very awkward things to own, or rather to have properly looked after. Several of ours had died since leaving Cassala, and a number were almost incapable of carrying loads. The fact is, that regular camel-drivers — and by that term I mean the class of men who accompany the camels one hires from place to place, as, for example, from Souakim to Cassala — are not to be had by paying them monthly wages. They are either owners of camels themselves, or the servants or slaves of owners; consequently, if one buys camels, one is forced to employ men to load and look after them who are quite unaccustomed to the work, and, moreover, take no kind of interest in it. Camels are very delicate; and, if accustomed to a low, hot country, will not thrive where the nights are cold, and *vice versa;* and, if used to travel in a level sandy country, they cut their feet dreadfully when obliged to traverse rocky or stony roads. A camel, too, that inhabits a district where grass

is plentiful, will not thrive where it is scarce, but where trees with green leaves abound; while others, on the contrary, relish green leaves, and will not look at grass. They are very stupid animals, and require to be taken to suitable feeding-ground, as they are not always sensible enough to find it for themselves. It sometimes happened that there was grass to be found on one side of the river's bed, and green leaves on the other; and our camel-drivers, unmindful of these peculiarities, would sleep in comfort, leaving these stupid animals to feed off whatever happened to come first.

On some parts of the Mareb, a parasitu plant, which the natives call *hikabeet*, with a most brilliant green leaf, is very common. It is poisonous, but camels will devour it greedily whenever they get a chance. We lost a good many from this cause; and others, though they recovered, were for a long time unfit for work. Careless loading, too, caused many of the camels to suffer from sore backs; and we were constantly at loggerheads with our drivers.

There is a disease, very common amongst them, which the natives call the *guffer*. We were never able to clearly make out what this disease was. Some of the Arabs declared it was catching; others, that it was not; but all said that a number of the camels we had bought on the Atbara were suffering from it when they were bought. Whenever we had to complain of any of the camel-drivers having, through negligence, allowed a camel to run down, the excuse was, that it was suffering from this mysterious disease, the *guffer*. We were once asked to look at a camel said to be suffering from this complaint. It was certainly in miserably poor condition, and, at the time, appeared to have a fit or convulsion of some kind. It rolled on the ground, apparently in great agony, and was only induced to get up after much difficulty. Somehow or

other, it got through the day's march, but was never afterwards good for much. Some of the natives said this disease was caused by the bite of the tsetse-fly during the rainy season.

We were told that one long day would bring us to Amedeb; but, although we rose at five o'clock, it was nearly nine before we were fairly off. It is impossible to hurry Arabs; and, whether we started with a large or a small caravan, getting off was always a very slow process. We took with us Mahomet Salee, and Bayrumphy, who rode on horseback; one did not like to go without the other, and, moreover, Bayrumphy was our interpreter with the Basé. He knew very little Arabic, and had first to translate Basé into the language spoken by the Beni-Amer tribe, to Mahomet Salee, who re-translated to us into Arabic; in this way, when any of the Basé wished to communicate with us, their original sentences were sadly mangled and distorted before we could understand them. Suleiman rode on top of the camel that usually carried our luncheon when on the march; and all necessary provisions, saucepans, etc., for the journey, were stowed away in the panniers on which he was seated. We took two camels, completely laden with heads and skins to be left at Amedeb; as we all expected to pass by there on our way to the coast, when we could pick them up again.

We carried the European servants' tent to sleep in. At first we thought of going without one, and sleeping in the open air; but were afterwards very glad we had not done so, as the nights were intensely cold, with fogs in the early morn ing. During my first journey in the Soudan, I slept without a tent of any kind; and both I and another of the party, who did the same, suffered from fever. I do not know whether we caught it in this way, or not; but I think it very likely that the cold nights, and often heavy dews, after the intensely hot

days, would induce fever. At any rate, none of our party suffered in this way during our last two journeys; and, except when lying out at nights on the watch for game, we always slept under canvas.

The road was at first very bad, and we had sometimes to cut our way through bushes in order to allow the camels to pass. We saw scarcely a bird or a gazelle; but we met a good many Basé, with fifty or sixty donkeys and a few goats, going to the Settite for *dhurra*, we were told; but I am sure that was not the case, as we found afterwards that the Basé on the Mareb had no dealings whatever with the people living on the Settite. Some idea of the poverty of the Basé may be formed from the fact that these donkeys and goats were the first we had seen since leaving Haikota, with the exception of three or four donkeys I had seen, as we were quitting Aibaro, trudging along in the sandy bed of the Mareb.

The country during the first day's journey was most uninteresting, hilly, and with the usual bush-jungle and occasional large trees, growing in the dry beds of streams that during the rains fed the Mareb; in one of these were the remains of wells. By nightfall we reached a village, situated on a hill, where we passed the night. It belonged to the Barea tribe. The people were very friendly, and gave us milk and water. There was no water nearer than three or four miles from the village, in the direction of Amedeb; and it was brought up the hill in goat-skins, and carried by the women on their backs. These people paid taxes to the Egyptian Government, and grew a good deal of *dhurra*. In appearance they much resembled their neighbours the Basé, but wore more clothing, and appeared altogether much more prosperous, which speaks well for the government. They have the reputation of being great thieves, and of being very troublesome people to deal with. I think the night we

spent in this village was the coldest I remember passing in the Soudan; and in the morning there was a thick fog that wet one through, quite like a Scotch mist, and which did not lift until nearly nine o'clock. The people told us it occurred almost every morning at that time of year.

CHAPTER XVI.

Our Journey to Amedeb. — History of Sheik Said Carcashi. — The Bombashi. — Promises aid in recovering the Stolen Property. — Ras Aloula. — Town of Amedeb. — Père Picard. — Mahomet's Sister. — Return to the Mareb.

As soon as the fog cleared away we started, and reached Amedeb about three o'clock. I never traversed so bad a road with camels, and imagine they are very rarely made to perform the journey. We had to go over a high mountain, from which we obtained a most extensive view; to our left were other mountains, many of them of most fantastic shapes, and covered with loose stones and a growth of short trees and bushes, while to our left stretched an apparently endless plain, on which our men made out they could perceive the fringe of *dhoum*-palms that borders either bank of Khor Baraka. The whole country was covered with what had been *dhurra*-fields, the hills being terraced for its cultivation, reminding me in appearance of the vines growing on the hillsides in Switzerland.

A long time before we reached Amedeb, we could see it in the plain before us. The valley in which it is situated is surrounded on all sides by mountains, except where it runs into the great plain, which extends east and west for miles. This valley is very unlovely, being covered with loose stones, and having a sparse growth of small bushes. Nevertheless, villages are numerous, all being built on the hillsides, and of the usual conical-roofed huts. We saw plenty of cattle.

A Basé, who had accompanied us from the Mareb, left us at

the village where we passed the night, to return, being afraid to venture into Amedeb. A son of Sheik Said Carcashi rode with us, on horseback, nearly into the town, where he, too, left us and returned.

Sheik Said Carcashi was originally a Basé from the Mareb, and was captured when a boy, and sold as a slave at Massawa. There he learned to speak Arabic, as well as to read and write it. Mnzinger Pacha (a Swiss, governor of that part of the Soudan and Sanheit, who was killed by the Abyssinians some years ago, during an engagement between them and the Egyptians), seeing that he was possessed of some intelligence, took him to Amedeb, and made him sheik over the neighbouring people. He is, of course, hated by the independent Basé living farther south. He goes about with a small army, consisting of a handful of his followers, dressed in brilliant-coloured calico drawers and red waistcoats, and armed with government rifles. Backed by these men, he squeezes taxes out of all the people he can induce to pay them. This is the man whom Sheik Kudul imagined we had brought with us into his country, when he told us, that, if such had been the case, he had meant to ask the Abyssinians to help him to fight us.

On arriving at the village, where we had spent the night, we had met our camels returning from Amedeb. They had arrived there the night before we did; and Sheik Said had detained them there, having heard that some disaster had happened to us, although he did not know what. Bad news, proverbially, travels fast; and these wild countries are no exception to the rule. They had found no *dhurra* for sale at Amedeb, but had procured some from Sheik Said; and could get only very little cotton cloth, and that at a high price. We started them off at once for Aibaro, as we were running short of *dhurra*, and had many mouths to feed.

We pitched our tents just outside the governor's house, and close to an empty hut, of which we took possession for our men and luggage. We had expected to find an old friend of last year in the governor of Amedeb, as a very intelligent White Nile negro, whom we had left last year in authority at Sanheit, had been transferred there; but he was absent, and a Turk, a military man, was taking his place. We lost no time in going to see him, and found him very civil, and about the most energetic man I ever came across in the Soudan. The natives called him the "Bombashi," which is a Turkish expression, signifying captain of a thousand soldiers. We found that the news of our trouble with the Dembelas had preceded us. Immediately on hearing of it, the Bombashi had telegraphed to the Bey at Cassala, telling him of it, and asking why he had allowed us to go into that country without an escort of soldiers. He replied, that we had told him we were going into the Hamran country (which belongs to the government), and that he had sent to the authorities at Jireh, where an Egyptian fort has lately been erected, telling them to look after us; but that they had sent back word that we had not been there. He said that he had sent messengers after us to Jireh, and two letters.

We explained to the Bombashi, that we had never told the Bey we were going to the Hamrans, as we had never intended visiting that part of the country, which had been visited by so many Englishmen that it was quite shot out. He promised to do what he could towards helping us to recover our rifles, but was not very hopeful about it. He told us that the Dembelas had only lately killed forty Beni-Amers in Khor Baraka, and driven off a great number of cattle. Some of our native servants had said that Sheik Arri, who is the most powerful of the Beni-Amer chiefs on Khor Baraka, and with whom we had had a good deal to do the previous winter, was at that

time on friendly terms with the Dembelas chiefs, and would be, very likely, able and willing to help us. After hearing this, however, we made up our minds to expect no aid from that quarter. The Tigrean Abyssinians had also, during the last two months, stolen some thousands of cattle between Sanheit and Massawa.

The Bombashi telegraphed to Sanheit, asking if they would send to Ras Aloula (who is the commander of the Abyssinian army, and the chief person in the country, after the king), demanding the restitution of the rifles. A reply came back very quickly, saying that they would do so. We felt sure, however, that they would never attempt such a thing. The governor of Sanheit also said, in his telegram, that he had telegraphed the news to the minister of the interior at Cairo. I, accordingly, telegraphed to Cairo, asking that a telegram might be sent to England, to say that we were all safe, as I feared an exaggerated account of the affair might get into the English papers. Unfortunately, as it turned out, I might have saved myself this trouble and expense.

Before leaving Cairo, I had arranged that if I telegraphed there saying, "Send such and such a message to England," it should be transmitted to a friend in London, who had promised to send it on to the friends of each member of the party. By a mistake on the part of the people at Shepherd's Hotel, the message, instead of being sent to this friend in London, was sent to "James," at my London address; my housekeeper forwarded it with my other letters, and it reached me unopened at Massawa. It is, of course, impossible to forward messages direct to England from the Soudan, as they have to be sent in Arabic. I thought the telegram would be sure to go safely, as I had left written instructions at Cairo. A second one I sent to England, on our return to Amedeb, shared the same fate,

and I received it on my arrival at Suez. I also telegraphed our thanks to the Bey at Cassala, for the trouble he had taken on our behalf.

Amedeb is a wretched place; it contains a garrison of eight hundred soldiers, and boasts of four cannon and a mortar. It is the worst supplied town I met with in the Soudan, owing, no doubt, to its being off any principal caravan-route; and is a purely military post, having no trade worth mentioning. Our camel-drivers had told us how poor the bazaars were; they had only been able to get five small packets of candles to take to the camp, one of which we appropriated, having forgotten to bring any with us. We bought a few beads to take back, but they were poor and very dear; and we were also able to obtain milk and eggs. We were in great luck, too, in being able to procure camels, as, during our stay, a string of from two to three hundred Shukereeyeh camels arrived, bringing *dhurra* for the government. We sent a Shukereeyeh camel-driver we had brought from Aibaro to their owners, and, after a great deal of discussion, succeeded in hiring eight, with four drivers, at the rate of twelve dollars a month each, enormous wages for the country; but they were all in such fear of the Basé, that they would not consent to take less.

While detained at Amedeb, I wrote a letter to Père Picard, a French priest, belonging to the Roman-Catholic mission at Sanheit, telling him of what had happened, and asking him to help us recover our rifles. We had made his acquaintance the previous winter; he is a most energetic man, and knows Abyssinia well; and I knew he would help us if he could. It was not merely on account of the monetary value of the rifles, that we were anxious to recover them, but we could not bear to think that they had got our weapons from us.

Mahomet, before he died, had told Salee that he had a sister

at Amedeb, who would take charge of any thing we wished to give to his wife, who lived in Khor Baraka. He said, that, as he had once killed a man near Amedeb, they would not dare to go there themselves; Khor Baraka was his home; and, although we found him at Cassala, he said he had only been there a month. The Bombashi found the sister for us; and we gave her Mahomet's sword, which, I believe, was the sum total of his worldly goods, and ten dollars, which she was to give to his wife, and to tell her, that, if she would go to the priests at Sanheit, we would look after her and her children. A more shrivelled-up old hag than this woman, I never saw; she looked half starved and miserably poor; and we gave her a present of money for herself.

After a day and a half spent at Amedeb, we started to return to the rest of our party. Having proceeded about two hours on our way, we were joined by Sheik Said Carcashi. We had met him at the Bombashi's divan when calling there the previous day, and he had been most solicitous to return with us to the Mareb. We explained, however, both to him and the Bombashi, that it was impossible for us to consent to his joining us, as we knew he was anything but friends with the Basé on the Mareb, and his going would lead to complications, to say the least of it. He was forced to admit that they were not on the best of terms; and I feel sure that, if we had consented to take him, he would have backed out of it at the last moment. This sheik had a long conversation with Suleiman, in which, as translated by Suleiman, he expressed great surprise at our making friends with "that beast man, Sheik Kudul." The Basé had eyed our departure from Amedeb with considerable suspicion; and, if we had brought Sheik Said back with us, they would at once have concluded that we were exploring their country with a view to taxation by the Egyptian Government.

BASÉ AIBARO.

The sheik insisted on our accompanying him to his house, which was at the foot of the steep hill we had been obliged to descend in going to Amedeb. He gave us some meat, which we were, of course, obliged to eat with our fingers, and some coffee, and also a present of honey, and some horrid looking cooking-butter in a dirty skin, which we took with us. Our men made very short work of the meat, after we had tasted some of it. We spent the night about two hours beyond the village, where we had broken the journey in going to Amedeb. The following morning, while preparing to depart, we were visited by a number of Basé quite as curious, and as scantily clothed, as their brethren on the Mareb.

CHAPTER XVII.

Alarm of an Attack by the Basé. — Our Camp moves on. — Independence of the Basé. — Elephant-tracks. — Most of the Basé leave the Camp. — A Shot at a Lion. — Difficulty of shooting while riding Camels. — The Arabs strike. — Abundance of Quail.

We reached Aibaro in the afternoon, and found the camp in a state of great excitement, and all hands at work strengthening the *zariba*. It appeared that Longay, who was the son of the sheik of Koolookoo, had informed our party that the Basé were getting dissatisfied, and meditated an attack on the camp. Longay had been with us all the time, and was of great use to us. My attention had been early drawn to him by George, who one day pointed him out to me fetching wood for the cook, and said, "The king's son makes himself most useful in bringing wood and water." As he was a person of more importance than most of the other Basé, he was promoted to cleaning boots and knives; and, being moreover so serviceable, we used to allow him inside the *zariba*, and his inner man was catered for by our cook. He told us that the Basé wanted us out of their country, and called him our slave. My belief is, that he said this to ingratiate himself further with us; and also it is more than probable, that the others were jealous of our attentions to him.

The Basé had certainly done all in their power, that morning, to induce the party to leave the camp; some declaring they had just seen buffaloes in one direction, and others, that there were

tétél in another. They would not, I think, have attacked us when we were all together, either by night or day; but it is quite possible, that, if they had succeeded in inducing a party to go out shooting, they might have endeavoured in their absence to loot the camp, and make off with whatever they could lay their hands upon; and Longay further added, that the Basé tribes were massing around us, preparatory to a descent on our camp. Fires in all directions gave a semblance of truth to this statement. At any rate, "fore-warned is fore-armed;" and it was just as well to neglect no precautions. Suleiman most injudiciously told some of the Basé that we had heard of the threat that had been made, but they indignantly denied it. Nothing occurred that night; but we had a watch, of course, as usual, and the next morning made a farther move in the direction of Haikota.

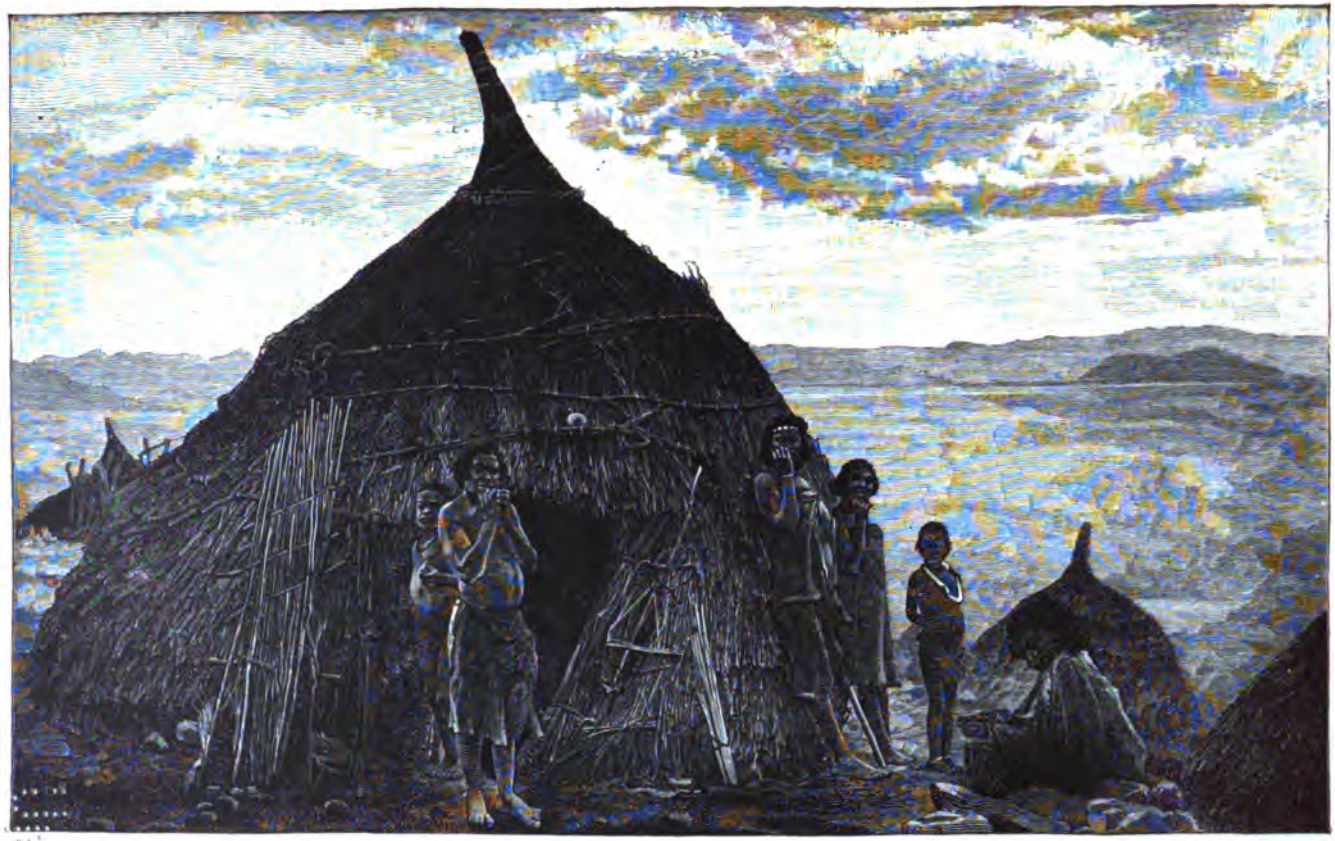
On first arriving at Haikota, we debated whether to go up the Gash, or to make for the Settite, that part of it over which we wanted to shoot extending along the river eastward from the Hamran country. Sheik Achmed declared we could go in whichever direction we preferred; but we chose the Gash, as we hoped, after travelling as far as possible along its banks, to be able to go straight across country, and so reach the river. The sheik had not actually promised that we could do this, but had said he felt sure we should find some of the Basé willing to show us a way to the Settite; but, even if we had had no trouble with the Dembelas, I doubt very much if it would have been a practicable journey for camels, owing to the rugged nature of the ground, the number of hills, and the thickness of the jungle in many places, through which we should have been obliged to make our way. I am sure, too, that none of the Arabs we had with us had ever made the journey, and I do not believe that any of the Basé knew the way.

The Basé are quite unlike any other African tribe I ever came across, one village having no communication or friendly relationship with another one, only a few miles off, so that they are anything but a united people; and in this way one has constant delays in travelling amongst them, as it is necessary to be all the time making fresh friends as one goes along. I do not believe that the Basé dwelling on the Mareb know anything whatever of those on the Settite.

Our Haikota horsemen declared it would not be necessary to go all the way back to Haikota before crossing to the Settite; as they knew of a road which turned off about three days' journey from that place, and where we could obtain water. A very pleasant day's march took us past Koolookoo. I think this is the most picturesque part of the Gash: its bed is here narrower than usual, and its course most tortuous. Immense trees in full leaf line either bank; and the undergrowth is very thick, affording excellent covert for the partridges and guinea-fowl, which are most numerous, and gave us capital sport. Where the covert is not too thick, these birds run, and are very unwilling to rise. They were most useful for our commissariat department; and, although very dry eating, we were very glad to get them.

Elephants had passed quite recently in the direction of the Settite, whither they had probably gone. They frequently march through from one river to the other, and, when pursued on the Settite, very often make for the Gash, and *vice versâ*. My brothers took up the tracks, and followed them for some miles. They were only a day or two old; and the whole herd, about thirty of them, at Wo Ammar, had marched clean through our old *zariba*, inside which we decided to spend the night.

At this point most of our Basé left us, and none of them ac-



BASÉ HUT AT KOOLOOKOO

companied us more than a few miles farther. We gave Langay a good present. I feel sure that any Englishmen wishing to shoot in that country would be certain of a kind reception by the people, if they only treated the people judiciously; at the same time, of course, letting them see that they were on their guard against any possible duplicity on their part. They were soon convinced that we meant them no injury, and, when we parted, told us they would be very glad to see us again; that we had procured them meat to eat, and added that they hoped, next time we came, we would bring them plenty of cotton cloth.

The heat began to increase very much. We had been glad, after dinner, to draw our chairs round a blazing fire, but the evenings had become so warm now that we required no fire, and were glad to sit in our pyjamas. The early mornings were, however, still cold; and then our blankets proved most welcome.

The day we left Wo Ammar, we started well ahead of the caravan, as we were anxious to see some pools of water at a rocky spot in the Gash, which we had missed in going up, by cutting off a bend in the river. We were rewarded by seeing some fine *méhédéhét*, which, however, made off before we could get a shot at them; but William shot a fine buck *nellut* as he was returning from one of the pools. Late in the afternoon, on approaching the Gash, we observed a large fire, and volumes of smoke in front of us; one of our horsemen declared it had been made by some Basé in order to drive buffaloes out of the high grass. Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when we saw a great cloud of dust, towards which we rode in all haste, anxious to discover the cause of this unusual phenomenon. We soon perceived a herd of some thirty buffaloes, led by a large bull, all galloping off as hard as they could tear. We pursued them as well as we could, for some distance; but our horses were not up to much pace, and, being late in the after-

noon, we could not have come up with them before darkness had set in.

On arriving in camp we found that about the worst possible place had been chosen for the tents, which had been pitched above the Gash, on a piece of ground which had been lately covered with grass, and, this grass having been burnt, the wind, which was very high at the time, blew the ashes about in all directions, and covered every thing with them. We always had our table laid for dinner outside, in the open air; but on this occasion we were forced to have it moved inside a tent, as we were nearly blinded by the charred remains of the grass.

It was from this point that our Haikota horsemen had promised to turn off with us to the Settite, and we had fully expected to start the following day. Soon after our arrival, however, we felt convinced a storm was brewing, as the men were unwontedly excited, and talking a great deal among themselves. It was not very long before a deputation came to us, to beg we would go another day's journey, a short one, they said, farther on, before turning off; they gave, as a reason for the change of route, a better road and more water, and declared (which was quite true) that the majority of the camels were not in a fit state to undertake a journey over a very bad road. We decided on taking their advice, and gave the order to start the next day, and encamp at the place they named, which is called Sekabah.

The following day, as Colvin and Lort Phillips were riding on ahead of the caravan, on the lookout for game, they suddenly came across a lion and lioness. Lort Phillips, having had his horse taken by the Dembelas, had since been obliged to ride a camel, — than which no beast can be more provoking. He jumped off as quickly as possible; but the animal set up such a fearful noise that it frightened the lions, who made off towards some high grass growing near. He had a shot at the lion at

about a hundred yards, through thick bushes, and knocked him clean over as if he had been a rabbit; however, he got up again almost immediately, and, before it was possible to obtain a second shot, had disappeared into the grass. They saw his marks, and some drops of blood, and followed him a short way, but were soon obliged to give it up, as they lost his footprints. If either of them had been on foot, and ready for a shot, they could have had one at about twenty yards.

Camels are most tiresome animals to shoot from. They will rarely allow you to mount or dismount without setting up a deafening roar, enough to scare away all the game in Africa, and are so tall, that, although they afford the rider a capital view of the country, they are most conspicuous objects, and apt to frighten off any game there may be about. Still, whenever there is not much sport in prospect, I much prefer a camel to a horse as a mode of conveyance in Africa. The motion of a good camel is not tiring when once you get accustomed to it, which you very soon do; and it will travel at the rate of about five miles an hour, for hours together. I am, of course, alluding only to the good ones. The *mahloofa*, or native saddle, is most comfortable; and you have the great advantage of being able to carry about with you plenty of odds and ends in the shape of water-skins, guns, and bags. We only took camels with us on our shooting expeditions for the purpose of carrying water and luncheon, as well as to bring back any meat we might have obtained; on these occasions, we invariably insisted on their keeping a long way in our rear. We were fortunate in having obtained good riding-camels; and they were better looked after than the baggage ones, as, in the first place, each of us paid a good deal of attention to his own individual camel, and we chose the best of the drivers to attend to them.

Arthur and I overtook Lort Phillips and Colvin soon after

the shot at the lion; and, as they had given it up, we decided on burning the grass where it had disappeared, to see if we could not drive it out, as we thought, if it was badly wounded, it could not have gone very far, and might show itself in the open. We accordingly burnt some miles of grass, but without any result; the only animal we saw being a gazelle, which rushed out into the river-bed, and then bolted back again into the blazing grass, evidently bewildered, and not knowing which way to turn. I afterwards shot a fine bull *tétél:* there are two varieties in this part of Africa. Lort Phillips and Colvin went on beyond the place where we encamped for the night, to a spot called Abiam, where the bed of the Gash becomes very rocky, and much narrower, and where there are some pools of water. Their ill-luck with the lions pursued them there; for, as they were leisurely riding along the bed of the river, they suddenly came upon a lion, lioness, and three cubs, almost hidden under the dense shade of a large *nebbuk*-tree, who as suddenly bounded up the bank, and disappeared; the ground was too hard to allow of tracking them. We often followed the fresh footprints of lions, but never with success; it always ended in their getting on ground too hard to take the impression of their feet, or else we tracked them into thick jungle, and there lost them. In returning to camp, Lort Phillips and Colvin shot some *tétél*, a very mild quarry after one's appetite had been whetted by the sight of lions. *Tétél* are very common throughout the Basé country; and we thought the meat better than that of any other species of antelope, and so frequently shot them for the pot.

Again we were nonplussed by our tiresome Arabs, who came to us in the evening, to ask us to put off our departure for the Settite, and this time declared that the only way for us to reach that river was by going first to Haikota. They gave two reasons

for this: first, the reason they had given us the day before, that the road was bad; and, secondly, that we should be obliged, if we took that road, to pass close by the village which Shelk Achmed and his men had lately attacked in revenge for their having killed some Haikota people. We were, of course, very angry and disappointed on hearing this; and then the camel-drivers all struck, and said nothing would induce them to go, the other Arabs followed suit, so that there was nothing to be done but to submit. I am quite sure that from the first none of them had the least intention of going to the Settite, other than by Haikota, only they did not like to say so a moment sooner than they were obliged to; and, from what we could afterwards make out, I do not believe that any single one of them had ever been that way before. Of course we had expected to find only the barest path, if even that; but it was necessary for some one to know the way, on account of obtaining water, which is not very scarce between the Gash and the Settite, but some one in the party must know where it is to be found. In following the road between Cassala and the Settite, in the Hamran country, there is no water to be found till one reaches the river. I made the journey in the spring of 1878, and a more disagreeable one I never experienced. It took nearly four days; water had to be carried for the entire journey; there was not a particle of shade the whole way, and I was suffering from fever at the time.

If we had been told, before leaving Haikota, that we should have to return there again before setting out for the Settite, we could have started with fewer camels, and, in that way, have saved ourselves both trouble and expense.

Not far from Abiam there was a piece of ground overgrown by fine grass (which was, of course, dried up like hay) and short scrubby bushes, where, in starting up and returning from the

Gash, we found quail very numerous. We shot a good many of them, as well as partridges, which were also very plentiful. Although I have sometimes come across a quail here and there, and very occasionally two or three together, this was the first and only place in the Soudan where I ever found them plentiful. They arrive in Upper Egypt about the beginning of February; and I have found them very numerous at that time, not far below the first cataract, and am at a loss to imagine where the thousands, that annually visit Egypt about that time, can come from; they certainly arrive from the south, and for some hundreds of miles south of the first cataract there is very little country that can afford good feeding-ground for quail. I have seen it stated, that Sennar, on the Blue Nile, is the limit of their southern flight; if they go there in any numbers, the country must be very different from any I have seen in the Soudan. They, doubtless, take immensely long flights without halting anywhere; which they are able to do, as proved by the great numbers that every autumn cross the Mediterranean from Europe into Africa. I believe they always make their flight by night. I have never seen them *en voyage*.

SETTITE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Return to Haikota. — Mishaps with the Camels. — Success of the Magic-Lantern. — Departure for the Settite. — The Village of Sogada. — Arrival at the Settite.

Two more long days brought us back again to Haikota, where we arrived on Feb. 25, and pitched our tents in our old quarters close to the German animal-dealer's *zariba*. At Toadelook, where we broke the journey, we found buffaloes in the long grass, but getting wind of us they galloped off before we could obtain a shot; we also came across tolerably fresh elephant-tracks. On our arrival at Haikota, we were delighted to find letters and newspapers, the first we had received since leaving Suez on Dec. 7. Our latest newspapers were dated London, Jan. 7. Receiving letters was an agreeable surprise, as we had ordered them to be sent to Amedeb, where there is a post-office; this was only an instance of the way in which every thing is done in the Soudan, exactly contrary to orders, as a rule. However, this time we were not disposed to quarrel with anybody for the mistake that had been made.

Before making a fresh start, we left five of our camels behind, as well as two of the hired ones: they were not fit to go on, being apparently quite worn out, some of them suffering from dreadful sores, the result entirely of having been carelessly laden; while others had eaten the *hikabeet*, and had nearly died of poison in consequence. Sheik Achmed hired three camels for us in place of these, which we thought would be enough, as we intended taking less luggage. We were told,

too, that we should be able to buy plenty of *dhurra* from the Basé on the Settite, so that it appeared we could cut ourselves down very much in that respect. Since leaving Haikota, no less than seven of our camels had died; and on our return there from the Settite, the sheik informed us that two out of the five camels we had left behind in his care had died of "snake-bite." The other three were supposed to have recovered.

We insisted on leaving behind the old man whose horse had been taken by the Dembelas, and two of the other horsemen. They had proved to be utterly useless, speaking neither Arabic nor Basé, and being very lazy; in fact, considering themselves quite above work of any kind. We had taken four horsemen whom we paid twenty-five dollars a month, and Mahomet Salee at thirty dollars. The latter did not belong to Haikota; his horse was his own property, and the money went to himself, — at least, so he told us; probably, however, he was made to pay a good percentage of it to the sheik. Of the remaining four, Barumphy had proved himself useful, as he spoke Basé fluently, and evidently knew the country well; he was supposed to own his horse, and keep half his pay, giving the other half to the sheik.

The other three were all servants of the sheik, who owned their horses, and, of course, took all the money. We knew, when engaging them, that we did not require so many, but we found it impossible to proceed without them; he had wanted us at first to take more of these useless incumbrances, and to pay them a higher rate of wages, but we had cut him down as much as we could. Of course, he pretended that they were all independent men, and that he gained nothing by their accompanying us; they were, moreover, all supposed to know the country, and to speak the language.

We gave the inhabitants another display of the magic-lantern

KHOR MEHETEB.

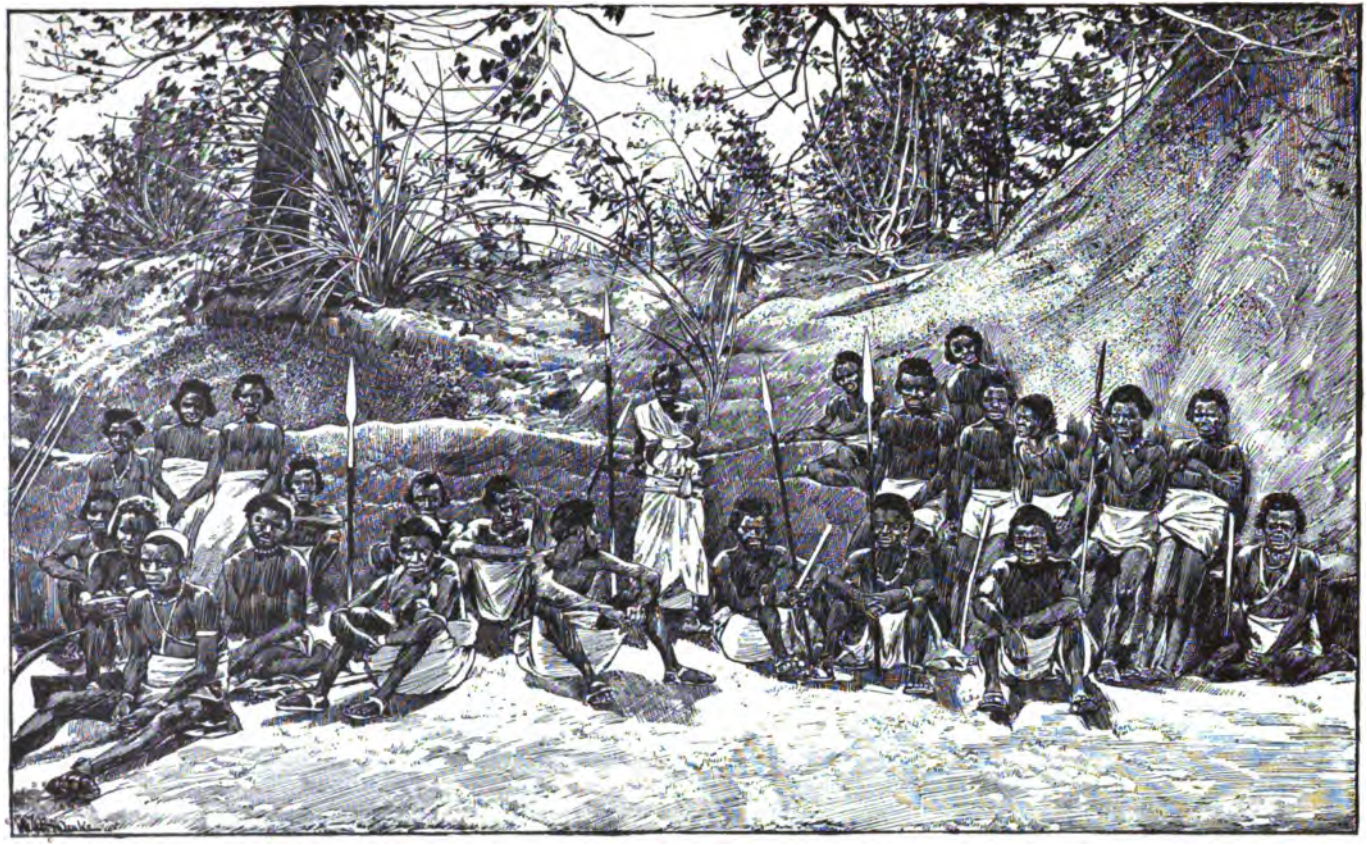
before leaving; and they arrived in crowds, and were greatly enchanted. As a termination to the entertainment, we let off a couple of rockets and a Bengal-light. One of the rockets did not go off properly, and ignited some grass; which fortunately, however, had been so much eaten down by immense herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, that we were easily able to extinguish it.

The year before, Suleiman, in carelessly throwing away the end of a cigarette, had set fire to the grass. He was ahead of us at the time, with the caravan. The fire spread very rapidly, and burnt miles of country, spreading even to the tops of some high hills. The camels got frightened, and many of them threw off their loads, and bolted; and a great scene of confusion took place. George, who was present, was much terrified, and as quickly as possible got the luggage and camels into the sandy bed of a *khor*, where he buried the gunpowder. There was no real danger; but it looked sufficiently alarming, and reminded one of a chapter in one of Capt. Mayne Reid's novels. We despatched a messenger to Cassala, with a large budget of letters for the post, and on the same day, Feb. 27, made a start south for the Settite. We had fully explained to the sheik where we wished to go, and had told him that we did not care to visit the Hamran country, which has of late years been so frequently shot over by Europeans, as to have very little game left. He promised that we should strike the river at its junction with Khor Meheteb, a *khor* that runs into the Settite from the north. This we understood was the farthest point in that direction where European travellers had succeeded in making a camp; as it was on the borders of the Basé country, and the Hamrans and the Basé are deadly enemies. We had hoped, commencing from here, to shoot for some distance up the river, and expected to find a tract of country which, though small, had not been previously shot over.

Our first day out from Haikota, we only made four hours. The country was uninteresting, — the usual bush-jungle, and very little game. All the grass had been eaten up by the immense herds which were in the country. Our camping-ground, however, was near some large trees, in an open space called Fahncoob, — a well-known halting-place of the Arabs, and with quite a park-like appearance. There was water in a *khor* not very far off; and we shot two or three gazelles, and so were enabled to supply the camp with fresh meat. The following day, before we had started, the sheik, his brother, and nine horsemen arrived; most of the latter returned after they had had some coffee, but the rest of the party remained with us. We were informed that we were to spend the night near a Basé village called Sogada; and here it was necessary to interview the sheik before travelling any farther.

About an hour before encamping, we passed a well, near which we passed the night; it was a very old one, very deep, and with an enormously wide mouth. To obtain water, it was necessary to scramble down the sides of it. We were told that no one knew how long it had been made, but that it was very ancient. I should think it must have been from two to three hundred feet deep, and I am quite certain it must have been built by a far more energetic people than either the Basé or the Beni-Amers are at the present day. The inhabitants of these parts are deficient in all but the very simplest agricultural implements; spades are unknown; and, when they want to dig holes for wells, they do so with their hands alone.

All day long, women were engaged in filling their baskets at the well, and climbing, with them on their backs, up to the village of Sogada, which was a good large one, and built, as usual, on a hill. It is astonishing what a weight of water these women will carry. Little boys and girls sometimes do the



KOOLOOKOO CHIEFS.

water-carrying, but no men ever demean themselves by such employment.

The people of the village were at first afraid to come down to see us; but the sheik sent some of his horsemen to them, who brought back the village sheik and some of his followers to interview us. They were very like the other Basé we had seen. The sheik had married his own sister, and had several children by her. This is very common in the country, and thought nothing of. They were very curious, wanting to know what could possibly have induced us to visit them. They said no travellers had ever passed that way before. I have no doubt that such was the case; and the Haikota people confirmed them in it, declaring that no Europeans had ever been to Sogada before.

The country was very wretched, hilly, and covered with *kittar*-bushes; nevertheless, a good deal of *dhurra* was grown near the village, far more than up the Mareb, where there was very little appearance of any attempt at cultivation.

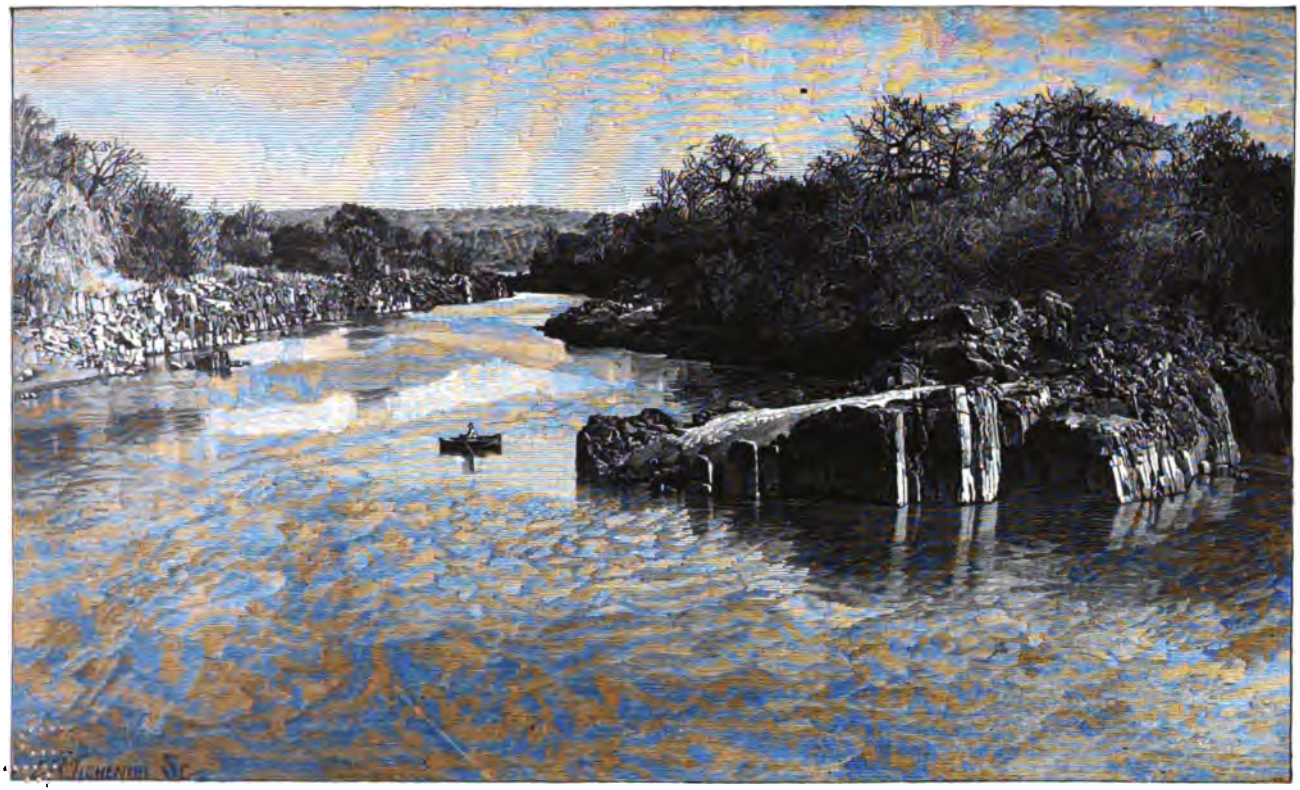
Sheik Achmed left us the following day, but not before he had induced us to take three Basé horsemen from Sogada. He declared, — and there seemed to be sense in his argument, — that they would be able to make things easier for us with the Basé on the Settite, and help us to procure a fresh supply of *dhurra*. The *dhurra* was a constant source of worry wherever we went, it being generally very scarce, and the people most unwilling to part with it, even when well paid for doing so.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Road to the Settite. — The Everlasting Forest. — Sheik Achmed's Deception. — Fishing in the Settite. — The Camp moves on. — The Guides and Camel-Drivers refuse to proceed. — The Return to Khor Meheteb. — Adventure with a Crocodile. — A Scare.

An hour on horseback, after leaving Sogada, we found water in a *khor*, which we were obliged to cross; and in another three-and-a-half hours, we reached a second *khor*, called Bash-akurrah, where there was more water, and where we remained until the caravan had overtaken us, which it did at about half-past four. It had been greatly delayed by trees and by frequent small *khors*, which the camels had been compelled to cross. There was often not the semblance of a path; and, if there was any, it was the merest apology for one.

In travelling through this country, one or two men invariably led the way on foot, with hatchets, with which they cut down bushes, and lopped off branches of trees, to enable the camels to pass. It was often necessary, too, to make rough steps with a pick, by which they could go up and down the banks, when obliged to cross a *khor*. All this, of course, took a good deal of time; and occasionally, too, a camel would fall down, or a box get displaced; and the delay so caused would keep the whole string of camels waiting. When the caravan arrived at Bashakurrah, the men all wanted to stop for the night; but we were most anxious to get on, and lose no time, so we compelled them to fill up the water-skins and barrels, and proceed



SETTITE

on their journey. They told us, that, by stopping there, we could fill up with water the next morning, make a long march, and encamp at sunset; and that on the following day we should reach the Settite before noon. We thought, however, that by going on a little farther we might reach the river by the following night. We sent all, except the water-camels, on ahead; and ourselves remained behind, to see that they took plenty of water. We lost our way in the darkness which overtook us long before we reached the camp; and we did not get our dinner until after midnight — every one decidedly cross.

A more monotonous journey than the one we made on the following day, I never performed. The country became less and less mountainous, with occasional patches covered with *kittar*-bushes, all, of course, leafless, and great grass-plains. For miles we travelled through a thick forest of leafless trees covered with thorns, and which we thought would never terminate; the trees were only twelve or eighteen feet high, and grew so thickly that we could see only a very short distance in front of us. It was more irksome than the most tedious desert, for there there is usually something, some hill, or speck on the horizon, to look forward to arriving at; but here there was no object to fix one's eyes upon, and to watch the distance gradually lessening. It was, moreover, impossible to say how long we should be in getting through this forest; there was the merest apology for a path, which we frequently lost for some time, and the hatchets were in constant requisition to fell branches in order to allow the camels to pass.

Sheik Achmed had kept his promise in giving us guides to explore the Mareb; and we had had no reason to doubt his word, when he had assured us we should visit the country on the Settite, east of Khor Mehetɛb. We soon found, however, that this time he was deceiving us, and had no idea of our going there.

On the morning of the day that we reached the river, my brother William with Mahomet Salee went up a small hill that we were passing, in order to fix positions for the map he was making, and which accompanies this volume. From the top of the hill, Salee pointed out to him the position of Khor Meheteb and the Settite. Salee recommended our encamping on the former for the night, about two hours from where it joins the river. He told us that there was water in the *khor*, near which he proposed that we should halt, and that animals frequently went there to drink. We decided to act on his advice, as we thought it would shorten what would otherwise be a very long day's journey; and moreover, the moon being nearly full, it seemed to us that it would be worth while to watch the water on the chance of game.

At about four or five o'clock my brother ascended another small hill, with the same object in view; and discovered that we were leaving Khor Meheteb a long way on our left, and bearing west in the direction of the Hamrans.

We saw at once how we were being deceived, and were naturally very angry and disappointed. On taxing Mahomet Salee with his duplicity, he urged in excuse, that at Sogada the camel-drivers and servants generally had declared they would not go farther east than Khor Meheteb; and that Sheik Achmed had told him to take us to the Hamrans, and to try and make the best of it to us. There was nothing for it but to go on to the river as quickly as possible, and see what was to be done when we got there, and to accept the situation as one of the inevitable drawbacks of African travel. We did not reach the Settite until ten o'clock, all in the worst of tempers, and having begun to fear that we had lost our way, and should be obliged to spend the night without water.

Our water-barrels having been empty since midday, all were

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parched with thirst, and we felt our poor ponies panting beneath us. At the sight of the river glistening in the moonlight, all our troubles were forgotten; and man and beast, regardless of crocodiles, plunged into the water, and slaked their parched throats with the tepid nectar of the glorious river.

We struck the river at a place called Geebou; it was broader here than we had expected to find it, and there was a splendid pool in front of us, fully a mile long, and in parts very deep. The bank upon which we pitched the tents was some twenty feet above the water. The country looked exceptionally wretched. A fringe of green trees bordered either bank of the river, beyond which the ground was bare, with no grass, and leafless trees. We were delighted, however, to be on a real flowing river, the water of which was very clear, and full of fish; and we determined to spend a day where we were, before deciding what was to be done next.

The first thing next morning we launched the Berthon boat, which had not suffered at all from its long journey. Colvin and Lort Phillips got out their fishing-tackle, and in a short time secured two fish of four and seven pounds with the spinning bait, and one of four pounds with a salmon-fly; they were clean, nice-looking fish, and we found them very good eating. There were a good many birds about the river, Egyptian geese, marabou storks, and various waders, among which we noticed the sacred ibis, which we were much interested to see; and we were not long in adding geese to our bill of fare.

We had brought with us a large seine fishing-net, of a kind we had used most successfully before on the Settite; and in the afternoon we determined to give it a trial. We thought we had found an excellent place for it, but unfortunately we could not walk along the bank in order to draw it at a spot where

some tamarisk-trees overhung the water, and where it was very deep. We were determined, however, to have a try somewhere else, as we had got it out, and had experienced considerable difficulty in getting enough men together to help us to draw it. This net was eighty yards long, and three deep, with a large pocket in the middle. To be thoroughly successful with it, it was necessary to find a place tolerably free from rocks, and where it could be drawn up in shallow water. Although the Settite was flowing, there were many such places, as in some parts the water was not more than a few inches deep. Our first haul, notwithstanding that it was in a most unfavourable place, was not a blank; for we secured twenty-five fish, weighing altogether eighty-six pounds, the heaviest being seven pounds.

The next day we sent Mahomet Salee off to a Hamran village called Korkee, with five camels, to purchase *dhurra*, having been told that plenty was to be had from the Basé living on the river farther eastward; but, when it came to the point of fetching it, Mahomet Salee declared that none was to be got there. It was too evident that we had been grossly deceived. We also sent two of the Basé horsemen to a Basé village called Lacatecourah, east of us and back from the Settite. They declared they would summon some sheiks who would arrange for us to go farther. We did not much believe in their promises, but thought they were better away, *possibly* doing some good, than hanging about our camp doing nothing, and consuming our *dhurra*.

The country swarmed with Hamrans, and people from Haikota; there was a large encampment of the latter on Khor Meheteb. Some of the Hamrans had rifles, given to them mostly by the professional animal-traders, generally Germans, who go to that country to get live animals with which to supply zoological societies and menageries. Sir Samuel Baker, who

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visited the country in 1861, has described the manner in which the Hamrans kill the largest animals, by hamstringing them with a single stroke of their swords. I never saw this done, and fancy, as the game has decreased, these Hamran Nimrods have decreased too. Those we saw obtained most of their game by means of traps, some of which are very ingenious inventions. They frequently kill hippopotami by means of harpoons, and the men who procure them in this way are called *hawartis*. These animals are very scarce now in this part of the Settite; when I visited the river in 1878, they were numerous in places where they are now almost extinct. The day before we arrived, one had been wounded in the pool above our encampment; but he had disappeared during the night, and had probably gone higher up the river.

As soon as we had sent the men on their various errands, we started farther up the river, and passed the place where Khor Meheteb joins the Settite; at this point we cut off a great bend in the river, and crossed it at a ford, having gone about two miles across country. Here we had an altercation with our men, who wanted to stop; but we insisted on continuing the journey, and, after cutting off another great bend about four miles farther on, struck the left bank of the river, and encamped.

Nothing could be more desolate than the appearance of the country at this point: it was more mountainous than lower down the river; but there was scarcely a vestige of green to be seen, and the river was narrower, and its bed very rocky. In one part it forced its way between great basalt rocks for a mile or two, the water being very deep, and it being impossible to get to the edge of it, as the rocks rose sheer out of the water on either side. We saw the footprints of buffaloes and hippopotami.

In spite of the desolate appearance of the country, the view from the point we had chosen for our camp was decidedly picturesque. We were on a small hill a long way above the river, which we could see, winding in and out, a silver streak among the black rocks, for a long way in the direction of Abyssinia.

The most conspicuous object in the distance was an immense mountain, called Bokutan, which the natives asserted was in Abyssinia. It appeared to be fifteen or twenty miles off, at least, and was table-shaped; it was marked, on a map we had with us, as five thousand feet high.

In the evening we were treated to another deputation of guides and camel-drivers, now quite a common occurrence, and almost as much to be expected as the setting of the sun. They all declared that they dare go no farther, and that we were then encamped farther in an eastward direction than we ought to be. They said that there were no Basé living on the river, the Abyssinians having driven them all away into the mountains, taken their cattle, and burnt the country. The country had certainly been lately burnt, as the whole surface of the ground was covered with the ashes of grass. Between our camp and Bokutan there was a hill; and between that hill and the mountain, according to these veracious guides, there was an Abyssinian village, which they dared not approach, as the Haikota people had killed two of their sheiks. All this we were told, after having been informed at Haikota that there were plenty of Basé villages along the river, the names of many of them having been given to us; and that the people were peaceably disposed, possessing flocks and herds and fields of *dhurra*. We had a long talk with the men, and could plainly see that they were not to be induced to go farther, and knew nothing of the country beyond. It was most provoking; because, if we had known we could not go, we should have spent our time on the

Gash, without going so far south. That there were people about, was evident, as we saw several large fires to the eastward. The majority were for retracing our footsteps to Khor Meheteb, which was a far pleasanter-looking place to encamp in than where we then were; and so accordingly, though with many regrets, we moved there the next day.

As far as Abyssinia is concerned, it would be very difficult to get into the country from that part of the Soudan. There is not much difficulty for Europeans wishing to travel there; but they must first get proper passes from the king, and these can only be obtained by waiting for some time. The best way to get into the country is from Massawa; and the safest plan to insure one's self against delay is to get some one to send a messenger a good long time before the traveller intends landing there, to get the needful letters from the king. A European, attempting to travel there without the requisite permission, would invariably find himself either turned back, or, more probably, kept a prisoner until the king heard of it, and chose to set him at liberty. Mules must be used for this journey, as the roads are impassable for camels.

Whether there were Basé, or not, living on the banks of the Settite, to the east of the farthest point we reached, I am sure we could have gone a good long way before coming upon any Abyssinian villages. Old Ali, our cook, was greatly excited at the thought of going any farther in the direction of Abyssinia; as, a few years previously, he and two English gentlemen, with whom he was travelling in that country, and who had not obtained the necessary permission from the king, were kept prisoners for a long time, and, during that time, lived on anything but the fat of the land.

I walked all the way back to Khor Meheteb, and a roasting-hot walk I found it. Arthur went part of the way with me,

and we kept a sharp lookout for hippopotami; there were the fresh tracks of three having been there, but we saw none. Fish, many of them of large size, were in shoals; the water was so clear that we could see them very plainly. We kept as near the water's edge as we could, and it was a case of scrambling over the rocks almost the whole way; in many places these rose perpendicularly from the water to a height of a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet.

I had an extraordinary adventure with a crocodile during my walk, which might have terminated rather unpleasantly for me. Our experience had always been, that crocodiles were among the shyest animals that one meets with in Africa, the large ones more particularly so. Of course no one would ever think of going into deep water where these animals are numerous, as I believe they are anything but afraid of man when they encounter him in their native element; and one not unfrequently hears of Arabs being carried off by them, when attempting to swim across rivers. We had, however, never hesitated to approach the banks of a river, even when they shelved off into deep water. On this occasion we had gone down to the river to drink at a place where the water was very deep; and I was stooping down, drinking out of the palm of my hand, when Arthur suddenly gave me a vigorous pull back. A very large crocodile, with a huge head, was making for me, and was within two feet of where I was standing, when Arthur perceived it. As soon as I jumped back, the crocodile turned tail, and made for the middle of the river. An Arab boy, who was holding our rifles while we drank, was so much astonished that he stood open-mouthed, and was so awkward that neither of us could snatch a rifle quick enough from him to get a shot before the monster sank and disappeared.

Probably, if my brother had not seen the crocodile when he

did, it would have tried to knock me into the river with its tail; it had, no doubt, heard us drinking, and had popped round from behind a rock. Sir Samuel Baker says in his book "The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia," that the crocodiles on the Settite are noted for their daring. This was certainly an instance of the truth of his remark.

During our walk we came across the evidence of hippopotami having been lately killed. In one place there had evidently been an encampment of Arabs, and close by a quantity of hide had been left. The place had no doubt been abandoned in a great hurry, otherwise such a valuable article as hippopotamus-hide would never have been left behind; it was quite fresh, and cut in strips for the manufacture of whips. A quantity of rope, too, was lying near it, and had doubtless been used for pulling the animal on to the bank. Our men's nerves were worked up to a great pitch of excitement, and I believe they imagined all kind of dreadful things were likely to happen.

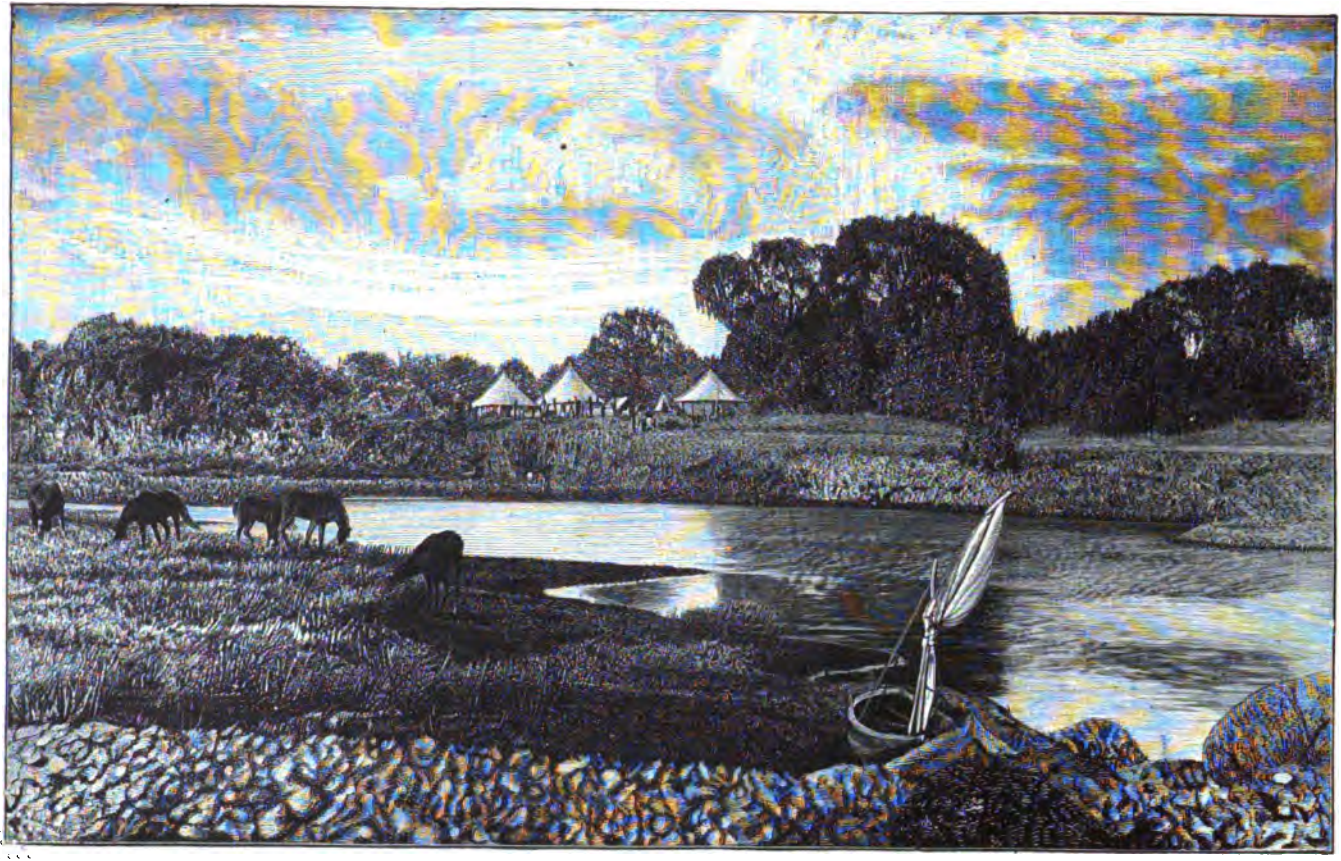
When the others joined us in the evening at the place where we had decided upon making a camp, they told us of a most amusing scare they had had, just as they were engaged in striking the tents. One of our camel-drivers, an old Shukreeyeh, had come running into camp in a state of terrible excitement, declaring that he had seen a large body of Abyssinians on horseback, and armed with guns and spears, approaching us from the direction of Abyssinia. There was an immediate call to arms, and a general scurrying for rifles, cartridges, and spears. Very soon, however, it was discovered that the whole thing existed merely in the old fellow's imagination, as there was not the least sign of a human being in sight other than those belonging to our own party; and the whole thing ended in a laugh, and an excited war-dance by our natives.

CHAPTER XX.

Encampment at Khor Meheteb. — Good Fishing. — The Kelb-el-bahr. — Capture of a *Baggar*. — A Visit from Basé of Lacatecourah. — Tracking Buffaloes. — Arab Escort sent back to Haikota. — Baboons. — Exciting Night among the Buffaloes.

We selected a lovely spot for our camp, very near the junction of Khor Meheteb with the Settite, on rising ground high above the right bank of the river, affording an extensive view, and backed by a fringe of fine trees, interlaced by a network of parasitic creepers, which gave us the much-wished-for shade; and at night, when the moon shone, the boxes ranged along the bank in front of the tents presented quite the appearance of the wall of a terrace. Away from the river, on either bank, the country was wretched, — miserable leafless trees, and patches of dry yellow grass, very short, and having the appearance of sandy mounds.

We remained at this camp from the 5th to the 13th of March, and had better sport there than we had expected to find. With the fish we were very successful, both with the net and rod; though we never caught any of phenomenal size, the largest being thirty-five pounds. I have little doubt, however, that they run much higher; but during neither of my visits to the Settite has it been my fortune to see any larger ones. We had several hauls with the net, one day catching sixty-eight fish, their total weight being 206½ pounds, and the largest fish seven pounds. Another day we obtained a hundred and four-



OUR CAMP ON THE SETTITE AT MEHETEB.

teen, weighing 365½ pounds, the largest being eight and ten pounds; these were all caught in two draws. We did not use the net nearly as often as we had hoped to do when we left England, because we spent much less time on a river than we had expected. It was really hard work pulling it. We always drew it ourselves, but of course required a number of men to help. They were all fond enough of getting the fish to eat, but we always found them very loath to assist us in working the net.

The boat was of great assistance to us on these occasions, in paying out the net, and taking the rope across. The last part was always most exciting; the fish, finding themselves getting into shallow water, would frequently leap over the net, even when it was held three or four feet above the surface of the water. The natives then required careful looking after; and we used to scream ourselves hoarse in endeavouring to give them directions, as they would drop the net to pursue a single fish if they saw one escaping in the shallows, and so neglect looking after all the others. Sometimes a snag in the river would completely spoil what would otherwise have been a capital haul; as, in freeing the net from the obstruction, most of the fish would escape. By far the best fishing we obtained during the winter was at the junction of Khor Meheteb with the Settite. Here the river is dammed by huge rocks, and forms a deep pool about two miles in length.

On the evening of our arrival, Colvin went down to try his luck, taking with him some tackle that had already made the journey to Australia, and had not been improved by the voyage. About the first cast he had a run; but after a short struggle the fish went off, taking with it the bait, a good-sized spoon. He put on another, and another, always with the same result; and then, thinking he would try some we had brought

from England, was more successful, and bagged a fine "*kelb-el-bahr*," weighing over ten pounds, with a spoon-bait. Colvin, standing on a high rock, continued fishing most successfully, fish after fish rushing at the novel bait, almost as soon as it touched the water; but he was frequently startled by a loud splash and clang, as one of the recently hooked fish, that had broken his tackle, leaped out of the water, and flapped its head against the rock, in futile endeavours to rid itself of the obnoxious metal bait.

The "*kelb-el-bahr*" is a most ferocious fish, somewhat resembling a salmon in appearance, having a moveable upper jaw, and frightful teeth that fit into one another like those of a rat-trap. It usually lurks about where shallow water is close to deep, on the look-out for victims who seem to know their danger, and will rarely venture into deep water. Often, when fording these shallows, we have frightened a shoal of roach-like fish down stream and into deep water. In a minute there would be a rush and a splash; and by the gleam of loose scales on the water, it was evident that master "kelb" had not let so good a chance escape him. This was a most sporting fish, always fighting to the last gasp, very much after the manner of a salmon. One caught in the net bit Mahoom in the ankle, causing a very painful sore.

But it was the *baggar* (of which mention is made by Sir Samuel Baker), that gave us most sport. It is a true perch, lacking only the zebra-like bands of that fish; its scales are as silvery as fresh-run salmon, and it has ruby eyes like those of a white rabbit or ferret. It loves deep, running water; and it was at the outlet of the above-mentioned pool, that we found them most plentiful. They did not seem to care much for the spoon or phantom-minnow, so we tried to get some live bait. This at first seemed almost impossible, as no one knew how

CAMP ON THE SETTITE AT MEHETEB.

to throw the casting-net; and the meshes of the big one were, of course, far too large to hold those of a suitable size for our purpose.

Lort Phillips hit upon a plan, however, which proved most successful. He noticed that a species of gudgeon frequented the large stones in the shallows, much in the manner that trout do at home; but unlike them they refused to be tickled. He got some large flat stones, which he placed in the water, supporting them on smaller ones, to make a good covert into which the fish ran when frightened; he then, with the help of Mahoom, dropped the casting-net over the top, and all that happened to be underneath were secured. With a supply of live bait, we were always sure of sport; no sooner had the float rounded the corner of a big rock in the middle of the stream, than it would disappear as if it had been a stone; then came a rush, and generally a clean jump or two, like that of a spring salmon.

One morning, as Lort Phillips and I were going out shooting, we saw Colvin at the old place, gesticulating wildly; and, on going to see what was up, found he had hooked a big fish, and wanted some one to gaff it for him. After some time it came to the surface, and in one of its struggles disgorged its breakfast in the shape of a partly digested fish, weighing a pound and a half; it proved to be a magnificent *baggar*, over twenty-two pounds in weight. This was the largest fish that had been caught so far; but the same evening, on our return, Lort Phillips caught one weighing twenty-four pounds. It is by far the best eating of any of the Settite fish; in fact, it would be hard to beat it anywhere for delicacy of flavour. There was another fish, a kind of silurian, of which we caught a great many; it is a very ugly, sluggish brute, and gives little or no sport; it would seize the bait, and bear straight away,

taking out yards of line often without being hooked. The largest fish of this species was caught at Om Hagar, and weighed thirty-five pounds. The fish we caught in the net were mostly bottom-feeders. I never saw any in such condition, their intestines being covered with fat. One species only took the fly, a kind of barbel; but its mouth was so tough that the hook never penetrated beyond the bait, and it was only by keeping a continued strain on the line that we could land them at all.

I shot the largest *tétél* obtained during the winter, not far from Khor Meheteb; it was a bull, and the leader of a small herd.

On the 7th the two Basé we had sent off to fetch some of their sheiks arrived in camp. We had despatched them the morning after our arrival on the Settite, thinking that by so doing we might be enabled to go farther up the river; they returned, bringing about twenty of their people with them, who they said came from a village called Lacatecourah, which is situated on a mountain we ought to have taken on our way from Haikota. We of course found that they could do nothing to aid us; they declared (but whether of their own accord, or instigated by the men we had brought from Sheik Achmed Ageer, we could not tell) that the Abyssinians had forced them to abandon their villages on the banks of the river, and had driven them into the mountains. We pretty well satisfied ourselves that the Basé had two villages, called Toansār and Beergayla, situated on the Settite; but whether they were still inhabited by Basé, or had been destroyed by their enemies the Abyssinians, we never succeeded in discovering. They stated, further, that the Abyssinians had only three or four days previously captured and carried off three of their women.

They brought the sheik of Lacatecourah with them, an insignificant-looking man, to whom we made some trifling presents,

RETURN AFTER A NIGHT AT MEHETEB WATER.

with which he seemed highly delighted. On their way to our camp, they had passed the night near to some water in Khor Meheteb; and, while resting there, a herd of elephants had come to drink about midnight, and buffaloes had visited the same pool early that morning. My brothers and Colvin started off with the intention of spending the night near the watering-place, on the chance of their returning; and about three A.M. those of us who had remained in camp heard several shots, which we hoped had been directed at the elephants. Unfortunately, however, they saw nothing of them, but returned to camp about noon, having bagged two buffaloes, a *māārif* (*hippotragus Bakirii*), a *tétél*, and an ariel.

They had found the pool of water about five or six miles from camp; and two of them had spent the night on the ground on the bank above the *khor*, and the other in a large baobab-tree. During the night a giraffe had come to drink, but it was before the moon was up, and they could see nothing of it. Then a herd of some twenty or thirty buffaloes made their appearance, but unfortunately there was such a poor moon that it was difficult to take a good aim; one fell dead, however; the rest made off. As soon as it was light, they searched to see if there was any sign of a blood-track, as they felt sure they must have hit one or two others; and soon found evidence of a wounded beast. Salee, who was with them, tracked the animal a long way. This man was a most extraordinary tracker, and would follow wounded game for miles when there was very little blood to be seen, and that only at long intervals, and where the country was so thick, and the ground so covered with fallen leaves, that it was often most difficult to find the buffaloes' footprints. Frequently, too, the ground was very hard, and covered with pebbles, making it extremely difficult to follow an animal's tracks; as the heaviest beast would leave so

faint an impression as often to be entirely invisible to the uneducated eye. They were just on the point of giving up the chase, as the sun was at its height, and they had been tracking for five hours, when they were suddenly confronted by the wounded buffalo; it turned to charge, when one of them dropped it by a lucky shot in the forehead. When first hit, the ball had caught it in the hind-leg, below the fetlock joint.

The *māārif* was shot by my brother Arthur, and was the first we had seen. It proved to be a small buck; and, unfortunately, one of the natives cut off the head so near the horns that it was spoiled as a trophy. No amount of exhortation would make them careful in this respect; and sometimes, when an animal was shot, one of them would be off like a deer after it, and spoil its head before you could stop him.

We found the heat was beginning to get very trying, even the nights being hot; but it was an intensely dry heat, and none of us were at all the worse for it.

On the 8th Mahomet Salee returned with *dhurra*, which he had obtained from a Hamran village. The next day we sent him back to Haikota, as well as Bayrumphy, and the other Arabs given us by Sheik Achmed Ageer; for we were determined that he should make no more out of us than we could help, after the manner in which we had been served by him. The Basé had all returned to Lacatecourah the previous day, with the exception of the three horsemen we had taken from Sogada; these, we said, might either go or stay as they pleased, and they elected to remain with us. Very soon, however, they changed their minds, persuaded to do so, I believe, by Mahomet Salee; for, after settling to remain with us, we found, on returning from an afternoon's shooting, that they had all taken their departure; the following day, nevertheless, one of them returned by himself to our camp.

As soon as we had started them off, Lort Phillips and I went out with our rifles to a small *khor* that ran into the opposite side of the river, and where there were some pools of water. We found that animals often preferred drinking at these pools away from the river, to going to the river itself, as by so doing they were less likely to be disturbed. We did not see much game. I shot an *oterop*, and my companion a buck *nellut* with the finest pair of horns of any we had bagged so far.

We spent some time watching a large troop of baboons. There were nearly two hundred, and one never got tired of watching them. A great many of the females carried young ones on their backs; and a great deal of screaming, and sometimes fighting, took place. It was wonderful to see the way in which the young ones kept their seats, as their mothers, to whom they clung, were chased from rock to rock and tree to tree by other baboons, generally not in anger, but for pure fun and mischief. We seldom shot any of these creatures, as none of the natives would eat them; we took three or four skins home, however, as they make very handsome mats.

On our return to camp we found that my brothers and Colvin had made another expedition up Khor Meheteb. During the night we twice heard shots in camp, the air being so still and clear that the report of a rifle could be heard for a long distance; and we began to hope it was really the elephants this time, when at about twelve o'clock they arrived, bringing a cow buffalo. They had had a most exciting night watching by the water, the first visitors to arrive being a large herd of buffaloes, who, however, got their wind, and galloped off without either drinking, or allowing themselves to be seen; next came two bulls, one of which they managed to send off wounded, and heard bellowing several times during the night. About day-

break a herd of about thirty made their appearance, two of which they wounded, but they got away. Having fortified themselves with a hasty breakfast, they next sallied forth to look for blood-tracks, which they soon found, and, after about two hours tracking, obtained a glimpse of a wounded beast; it was only a glimpse, however, as, before any of them could fire, it was off at a gallop. They lost no time in continuing the chase, and had not gone far before the infuriated buffalo charged Arthur from behind a bush, where it had stopped to hide.

Buffaloes are very cunning animals, and frequently when wounded, or perceiving themselves pursued, will retrace their steps, lie *perdu* behind some good covert, and charge the sportsman as he goes by.

My brother fired both barrels, but neither shot had the desired effect of grassing the buffalo, though both hit it; the only result being to turn the attention of the animal to Colvin, whom it charged furiously, scarcely giving him time to raise his rifle to his shoulder, his second barrel being fired when the animal was literally at the muzzle. Colvin was sent flying in one direction, his rifle in the other, while the buffalo fell between. This was a narrow escape, too close to be pleasant; but fortunately no harm was done; the buffalo, though not dead, being unable to rise, as the shot had taken effect in its knee.

They then took up the track of the bull buffalo, which was also wounded, and following it until they found themselves not far from the camp gave it up, as the heat was terrific, and they were rather done up after a sleepless night, and a long walk in the sun, with such an exciting finish. This bull, according to Salee's reading of the marks on the ground, had been attacked by no less than three lions; they had heard the roar

of two of them, at night, and had seen the marks where the buffalo had turned, and evidently charged his tormentors; after a time, two out of these three lions had discontinued the hunt, but the third had held on a long time before also giving up. Besides these buffaloes, they discovered in the morning that a giraffe had drunk at the water, but they had seen nothing of it.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Visit from two Hamran Sheiks. — Fresh Sport among the Buffaloes. — A *Shereker*. — A Second Visit from Hamran Sheiks. — They offer to guide us into their own Country. — Three Basé join the Camp. — They are attacked by the Hamrans. — Moosa's Discharge.

On the 11th two Hamran sheiks arrived in camp. They were most anxious that we should take one of their people as a guide, which we refused to do; they told us that there was far less to shoot in their country than there had been a few years ago, and that every year the game was decreasing. We needed no one to tell us this, as it was only too evident. There was far less game on the Settite than there had been when some of us had spent a few days on the river four years previously, and even then there was nothing like as much as there had been four or five years before our first visit.

Our Hamran visitors told us that the farthest camp any European had made on the river, entering from their country, had been a few miles higher up than our last camp. They said they were friends with the Abyssinians, and that their head sheik could arrange for us to go into Wolkait by way of Cafta; that, although they were not afraid of the Abyssinians dwelling on the Settite, nevertheless they did not go very much farther up the river for fear of the Basé. The fact was, that the Haikota people would not go with us any higher up the river for fear of the Abyssinians, and that the Hamrans equally would not go for fear of the Basé, so that we were checkmated either

way. I, moreover, very much doubt the ability of the Hamran sheik to have made any arrangement for our going to Wolkait.

My brother Arthur and I started to take up the tracks of the bull buffalo that had been wounded the previous day, taking with us Achmet, our stud groom, an excellent tracker (quite as good as if not better than Salee), who had been present when the animal was wounded, and had helped to track him for some miles. He took us straight to where they had given up pursuing him the day before, which was not more than half an hour's walk from camp. After following his footprints for about ten minutes, we came to where he had evidently passed the night, and very soon perceived, by certain indisputable signs, that the object of our pursuit was not far off. Achmet declared that the other bull, his companion, which had drunk with him at Khor Meheteb, had joined him; he could distinguish the tracks of both animals, although the jungle was rather thick, and the ground hard and stony. He, moreover, noticed that one of them did not stop to eat grass on the way, but that the other frequently did so; the former he declared to be the wounded one, and he was no doubt quite right. These little things would escape the notice of most people, but Achmet was marvellously quick and observant.

Eventually we tracked the buffaloes into a thick clump of dwarf *dhoum*-palms; and Achmet felt sure he saw one of them through the bushes, and endeavoured to point it out to us. At last Arthur saw a small black patch in the thicket, which he would have been very sorry to have sworn to being any part of a buffalo. As it was impossible, however, to go any nearer, so as to make further investigations, he fired at this black patch. We heard no crash after the shot, and he fired twice again, with no visible result. Achmet next ascended a tree, so as to endeavour to look over into the bushes; he was not long in getting

to the top of the tree, which was an exceedingly difficult one to climb, being armed with numerous thorns; but to his other accomplishments, he added that of being able to climb like a monkey.

We soon heard a joyful shout from Achmet, telling us that the buffalo was dead. Before, however, venturing any nearer to his vicinity, we threw some stones to see if he would stir; as these animals will sometimes get on their feet, and make a last charge, when you think they are done for. As nothing moved, we pushed our way through the *dhoum*-palms; there we found an enormous bull buffalo, quite dead. He had been standing with his tail towards us, and was shot in the back of the head, the ball lodging in the brain, death consequently being instantaneous. The report caused by the first discharge of the rifle had prevented our hearing him fall, and the second and third shots had evidently been fired into space. He had been killed by a single ball in the head; and we found, on examination, that he was not the bull that had been wounded on the previous day. In the neck we found a conical bullet, which, from its appearance, had been there a long time, perhaps for years; the skin where it had entered was quite healed up, and had left only a small scar. Curiously enough, my brother's bullet had killed a camel-bird at the same time as the buffalo; the bird must have been standing on the bull's head, searching for ticks.

We "piled arms" behind a tree some little distance off, and superintended the cutting-up process. Having satisfied ourselves as to the bullet that had killed him, and seen that the head was properly removed, we were making for a shady tree, when we heard a great rush, and out bolted the other bull. He must have been standing not more than fifteen yards from the place where we had been engaged in skinning his companion; and it was most fortunate for us, that he had not taken it into

his head to charge us while doing so, for in that case some of us might have come off rather badly.

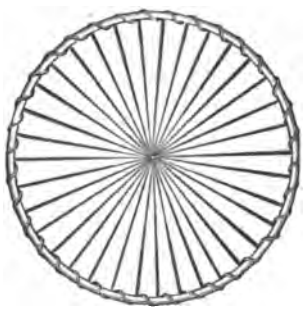
We were not long in starting in pursuit, and soon caught sight of him as he went crashing through the jungle. I ran forward, and fired a snap-shot; but unfortunately, as I have already mentioned, my ten-bore had got out of order, so that the concussion produced by firing off the right-hand barrel (and that loaded with spherical ball) set off the left-hand one at the same time. My hat went flying off, the recoil nearly knocked me backwards, and I was half deafened.

My brother had fired at the same time I did; and one or both of us had hit him, as there was fresh blood on his tracks. We followed him to some very thick *dhoum*-palm covert, where we could not penetrate. One of the natives climbed a tree, and reported that he saw the buffalo in the palms, and that he was badly wounded, but not dead. We did all we could to drive him out, but he would not move. Finally my brother climbed a tree that overlooked the clump of stunted *dhoums* and grass into which he had betaken himself, and gave him the *coup-de-grâce* from the top. On examination it proved to be the bull that had been wounded in the night; the bullet had hit the near fore-leg. We returned to camp in time for luncheon, with the two finest buffalo-heads that had so far been obtained, and well pleased with our morning's work.

At four P.M. the same afternoon, Aylmer, Lort Phillips, and I started for the water in Khor Meheteb, intending to spend the night there where the others had been so successful. The nights had become very hot; and we slept in the open air on the ground, on a slight eminence overlooking the water. We heard a lion roar during the night, and several noises we could not distinguish; but nothing came to drink, nor were there any signs that game had been there the previous night.

We found a great many Beni-Amers from Haikota encamped in Khor Meheteb, who had quite an encampment two or three miles lower down than where we had spent the night. They were there chiefly for the purpose of entrapping animals, their mode of doing so being the same as that practised by the Hamrans. Most of their game they obtain by means of snares, which they place on the paths made by animals on their way to drink.

They have a very ingenious invention, called *shereker*, to prevent the noose from slipping off the leg before it has drawn tight. It is made in the following manner: two hoops are bound tightly together, and, between them, sharp pieces of tough wood are driven all round, their points just reaching the centre. Those intended for catching antelopes are about the size of a soup-plate; but for buffaloes, giraffes, and other large-footed game, they are made much larger.



With a supply of *sherekers*, as well as running-nooses, these latter made of twisted hide, the hunter is ready to commence operations. Having found a well-beaten track near to some watering-place, he digs a hole in the middle of it, about eighteen inches deep, and a little smaller in diameter than the *shercker* he intends to use. He next cuts a branch or small tree, just large enough to check the progress of the animal, but not to stop it; to this he makes fast the loose end of the noose; then he places the *shereker* over the hole, and arranges the noose over the *shercker*, brushing some loose earth over all in order to conceal the snare. Any animal, stepping on the pitfall, sinks down; and, on starting back, the *shereker* remains

fastened tight to its leg, and prevents the noose from falling off, till it is so tightly drawn that its aid is no longer required.

The poor beast rushes off, dragging the bush after it, which not only soon wearies it, but leaves behind a fatal track by which to guide the hunter, who soon overtakes it; and the spear puts a speedy termination to its sufferings. The accompanying engraving will give a good idea of a *shereker.*

On our way back to camp we came upon three trappers, encamped near a small pool of water, at which they informed us that a single buffalo had drunk the previous night. During the night they had caught a giraffe in a noose, but it had broken away and got off. We decided to follow the tracks of the buffalo they told us of. We had been following them for some time, when Lort Phillips, who was riding ahead, suddenly espied three lions to his right. We lost no time in running after them; but they ran too, and the grass into which they ran was so difficult to track them in that we had not gone far before we completely lost all trace of them.

I rarely felt such terrific heat, even in Africa; and, after a long chase, we were obliged to give up, and lie down for some time under the shade of a tree. We seemed destined never to shoot a lion. We often used to track them, but always found their footprints led us into impenetrable jungle. We probably frequently passed close by them, lying asleep in thick covert, without being aware of their vicinity. In returning to camp, we saw a *māārif*, but were not fortunate enough to obtain a shot at it; however, we secured a *tétél* for the pot. We saw immense numbers of these antelopes, in herds of from thirty to fifty, and a fair number of *nellut;* but none with fine heads.

Before shifting our camp from Khor Meheteb, we were favoured with a second visit from some Hamrans. A sheik named Said, and another sheik, name unknown, made their

appearance one evening, arriving, with a number of camels, from higher up the river. They told us they had killed six or seven hippopotami, and offered to accompany us two days' journey farther up. We decided, however, not to retrace our steps. Had we done so, they would, in all probability, have backed out of it before we had gone very far. I was inclined to try what we could do, but the rest of the party were all against attempting a retrograde movement.

It is always most difficult in such countries to know what to believe, and what not to believe. Each person you meet tells you a different story, and it is no easy matter to get at the truth. These Hamrans declared that there were no people living on the river for four or five days' journey farther up; but this was doubtless untrue; for, although perhaps there were no villages for some distance, there were certainly people not far off, as from our last encampment we had seen several fires at different points. They told us that between Khor Meheteb and the Atbara there were scarcely any "hippos" left, but that higher up the river there were plenty. This may have been true, but we were not particularly anxious to shoot them. As only some of our party were in camp when these Hamrans arrived, we told them to return in the morning for their answer.

Soon after their departure, three Basé from Lacatecourah made their appearance. It was dark when they arrived, and they begged to be allowed to accompany us. We gave them permission to do so, at the same time advising them not to go far away from camp for fear of a hostile meeting with any of their enemies, the Hamrans.

Sheik Said and his friend returned the following morning for their answer; and we told them we had decided on going down the river, and not up. Shortly after we had made our resolution known to them, they left. Very soon after their departure,

KHOR MEHETEB.

we heard shouts, and perceived that some disturbance was going on. The Hamrans had discovered that we had Basé with us, and had pursued them with their guns, threatening that they would shoot them; but the three Lacatecourah men, together with the man from Sogada, ran away as fast as their legs would carry them, — the latter leaving his horse behind with us.

The Hamrans soon gave up the chase, and went a short way down the river; on the way they met some of our Arabs, whom they informed that we should not go down the river into their country, and that, if we persisted in doing so, they would shoot us. We were naturally very indignant with them for their impertinence, and very angry at their having frightened away men who were living in our camp with our permission; we of course poohpoohed their threats, and told them we should go where we pleased.

They had a right to be annoyed at our going into their country with Haikota people, and shooting their game, as by so doing any *baksheesh* we might distribute, or wages we might pay, would go to them, instead of to the Hamrans, the inhabitants of the country; it was, however, a very hostile method of expostulating with us about it. Had we intended shooting in the Hamran country when we left Haikota, we should of course not have taken any of Sheik Achmed Ageer's people farther than to the borders of the Hamrans; but when we left, we never contemplated spending any time in their country. We took no notice of their threats, but broke up our camp, and rode on. Suleiman harangued them as we passed them sitting under some trees, with a number of their people; and they made an apology.

We had not gone far before a native came running to tell us there were two "hippos" in a pool close by. We soon found

them; and, as one appeared to be a baby one, we determined to try either to catch him in the net, or force him out on to the bank, and so secure him if possible. It was the very pool we had dragged for fish the day after our arrival on the Settite, and we placed our camp a little lower down than the site we had chosen when we first encamped on the banks of the river. We had been mistaken in imagining that either of the "hippos" was a baby: on the contrary, they were both full-grown. One kept ahead of the net, but the other dived underneath and went back; however, we caught some fifteen or twenty fish, mostly small ones, which we could not weigh as usual, having left the steelyard at the camp. We distributed the fish among the Arabs who had helped us with the net. It was rather like fishing for sharks, and catching minnows. Colvin and Lort Phillips tried to shoot a "hippo," after we had given up the idea of catching one alive; but they were no more successful in endeavouring to ornament the larder with it than we had been in our attempts to secure it for the Zoological Gardens.

Three of us returned to camp in the Berthon boat, a somewhat difficult undertaking, owing to the number of shallows over which it had to be dragged or carried, and which rather reminded one of the man who agreed to work his passage by the canal-boat, and was made to lead the horse most of the way.

Just before reaching camp we heard a shot, and on arriving there found a great commotion going on. It appeared that Colvin, who had just come in, had given his rifle to Moosa to put down; when he handed it to him it was at half cock, with the locks bolted. Salee wished to take it from Moosa to put it in the tent, but he was not willing to give it up; and in endeavouring to take it from him by force it went off, and the bullet passed close by Salee's head.

We had brought Moosa from Cassala; he was a boy of about fourteen, as sharp as a needle, but a thorough young scamp, with a most violent temper. Salee declared he had tried to shoot him on purpose, but there was no evidence of this being the case. We gave him a good thrashing, which we hoped would be a lesson to him to be more careful in future; and rated him well for his carelessness, as, in any case, he must have been playing with the locks for the rifle to have gone off at all. For some time before this, we had thought it prudent to keep our rifles loaded in view of possible contingencies, otherwise Colvin would of course have extracted the cartridges before giving it up to a native.

Not many days later we were obliged to send Moosa away altogether. Having picked a quarrel with another Arab boy of about his own age, he rushed at him with a large pair of sharp-pointed scissors used for skinning birds, and inflicted several severe wounds on his chest and arms. After having administered a sufficient correction with a convenient *koorbatch*, we handed him over to a neighbouring Hamran sheik, to be sent back to his own people at Cassala at the first opportunity.

The place where we encamped was called Om Gedat, or "mother of the guinea-fowl," so named from the immense number of those birds that resorted to the neighbourhood. After a night there, we moved about ten miles farther down, and pitched our tents on the left bank of the river, at a spot named Om Hagar, or "mother of the rock." The Arabs on the Settite are very fond of such names. A village still farther down, they term Om Brega, "mother of the thorn," also a most appropriate designation, the village being situated in a wood of *kittar*-bushes.

Lort Phillips and Aylmer made the journey together to

Om Hagar, in the Berthon boat. This boat proved a most excellent institution, and was a great acquisition during our stay on the river. It was nine feet in length, and, being collapsable, was easily carried on one side of a camel, in which position it travelled the whole of the long journey without mishap; and, notwithstanding the great heat to which it was constantly subjected, was as sound on its arrival at the coast as on its departure for the interior. As I have already mentioned, it was extremely serviceable in shooting the net, and in clearing it when foul of rocks. It, moreover, afforded an easy means of crossing the river; thereby saving many a weary tramp to reach the nearest ford, possibly two or three miles distant.

NEAR OM HAGAR.

CHAPTER XXII.

Departure for Om Hagar. — Good Sport. — Arrival at Om Hagar. — Buffalo Tracks. — Capture of the Frst Hippopotamus. — Visit from Hamran Sheik's Son. — The Last Hippopotamus. — Marabou Storks. — Purchase of a Tortoise. — A Splendid Buck *Nellut* shot.

BEFORE leaving Om Gedat, we engaged as guides a couple of Hamrans, who turned out fairly useful.

The appearance of the country between this point and Om Hagar considerably improved, and was, to a sportsman's eye, decidedly more promising. The hills that bordered the river, though still steep and stony, were less rugged than those we were leaving behind us; while, beyond, the country opened out into a plain, interspersed with small hills on the north side of the river, and apparently boundless to the south of it. The trees, too, that fringed the river, were much greener and larger than heretofore, thereby affording more covert for the game we hoped to find. Dotted about amidst grateful shade, were the giant habitations of the white ants (*termites*), nowhere more numerous, or of larger size, than in this part of the country. Our tents were pitched on a spot high above the river, with a grassy lawn sloping down to the water, well known to Ali our cook, who had previously spent much time in the same place. He lost no time in establishing himself under a leafy bower, to which he apparently considered that he possessed a proscriptive right, by virtue of old association.

On the opposite side of the river, but a little lower down,

what at first appeared to be a *khor* ran for about a mile and a half to two miles, parallel with the Settite, where it joined the river, forming, when the water was high during the rains, a large island. In its bed were several pools of water, favourite drinking-places for the game in the country, and often preferred to the main body of the stream on account of their retired situation.

On the afternoon of our arrival, my brother William and I took our rifles, and crossed the river at a ford. Before going very far, we espied in the distance a herd of *tétél* feeding, and cautiously creeping from bush to bush, I endeavoured to lessen the distance between us. The wind was right, and the ground well adapted for stalking; so before very long I succeeded in gaining an advantageous position for a shot. I was rather anxious to secure one, as I perceived that the herd belonged to the less common Lechtenstein variety, and was well pleased when a fine bull fell dead to my shot. This, however, proved to be merely a beginning to the afternoon's sport.

Declining to follow up the herd of *tétél*, we left a man to cut up the game, and guard it from vultures, and pushed on in a northerly direction. Before very long my brother espied a beautiful specimen of the graceful ariel antelope. This animal is usually very wary, and to approach it successfully requires considerable care. A wide *détour* was necessary in order to gain the wind, which, however, we accomplished. It was impossible to get a near shot, as the antelope was restless, and evidently aware of impending danger, and the covert was thin and scanty. Well concealed beneath the shade of a huge *nebbuk*-bush, I could watch the whole proceedings with my field-glass. At last I could see that my brother had decided to risk a long shot in preference to taking the chance of losing one altogether by endeavouring to attain closer quarters. A puff

of smoke, followed by the report of the rifle; and I saw the ariel bound high into the air, and fall to the ground, where it struggled convulsively for a few seconds. The range was over two hundred yards, and the bullet had passed through its shoulders. We now sent a native back to camp to bring a couple of camels for the meat, leaving a third with the dead ariel, while we rested under a tree. In a very short time a camel and some men appeared on the scene; having heard our shots in camp, they had started off of their own accord, thinking it probable that their services would be required.

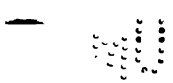
As we had been so successful in such a short time, we made no delay in starting forward, taking with us a couple of the new arrivals. Within a mile of this spot, we came upon a herd of ariel; and after a short stalk my brother was again successful, obtaining two out of the herd by a right-and-left shot. Considering that we had now done our duty as caterers, we turned our steps in a homeward direction, knowing that we should be welcomed on our return by dusky faces glowing with the anticipation of an unstinted repast. But Diana had not yet forsaken us. Before reaching the camp, we were startled by a crash to our left, and, turning round, saw a fine bull *tétél* galloping swiftly over the stony ground. At about a hundred yards' distance, fatal curiosity apparently overcame prudence, and he turned to see what strange animal had produced the noise that had frightened him. Now or never was my chance; he was standing broadside on, and afforded a splendid shot, which I hastened to take advantage of, thus adding number five to the afternoon's bag.

We pitched our camp at Om Hagar on March 14, where we remained until the 22d, from which date we considered ourselves as more or less homeward bound. We drew lots, as usual, for pairs to go out shooting. This we did to economize

the ground, and because we were far too large a party to have invariably gone out shooting singly. Of course, by dividing into two parties, and having separate camps, each taking a different district, we might have augmented the bag; but in such an expedition as ours, we felt that, although shooting formed our chief amusement, yet still there were many other considerations which made it both pleasanter and more desirable to hang together. For instance, in the Basé country, which occupied the larger portion of our time in the game districts, the trouble and risk of entering that territory would have been more than doubled by dividing the party. Again, the Hamran country is in itself but a small slice of the Soudan; and, being inhabited by a race of hunters, the part which contains game is even more circumscribed, and would soon be shot out by a party armed with English rifles. Moreover, we all thoroughly appreciated the old adage "The more the merrier;" and fighting our battles over again, over a dish of succulent buffalo or antelope steak, on one's return in the evening, was not the least agreeable part of the day's programme.

Finding the neighbourhood of Om Hagar so well off for antelope, we were anxious to lose no time in exploring for larger game. The day after our arrival there, my brother William and I went out together. We crossed the river, and were not long in discovering the tracks of a large bull buffalo, which led us to a small pool of water near our camp, in what, for want of a better name, we always termed the *khor*. This was the dry part of the river's bed, which, uniting with the main body of the stream, formed during the flood season an island, to which allusion has already been made. The accompanying woodcut is engraved from a photograph of this *khor* taken by Aylmer. The buffalo had been quenching his thirst in this *khor* the previous evening; his tracks led us back through the dense *nebbuk-*

ALI'S KITCHEN AT OM HAGAR.



bushes that fringed its banks, and where he had doubtless slept the night previous, to the plain not far from the spot where we had originally encountered the herd.

It soon became very evident that the object of our pursuit could not be far distant, and we crept forward with our rifles at full cock; when suddenly, from behind a thick tree we heard a rush, and, barely giving us a glimpse of his black hide, and affording no chance of a shot, he made his best pace for the *khor* again. Taking up his tracks, we followed them for about three miles, until we again reached the thick belt of *nebbuks;* and then the pursuit became more exciting, as each minute we expected to find ourselves face to face with him. The thorns, even to us, habituated as we were to the many frightful species which abound in this part of Africa, were something phenomenal; and if our clothes had not been made of the toughest materials, we should have emerged less clothed than even the scantily clad Basé.

This time the buffalo did not even indulge us with a sight of him, but, before we had been long in the bushes, again made for the more open country, taking much the same line as before. The day being intensely hot, the thermometer in camp marking 105° in the shade, we cried a halt, and passed some three hours under a tree, in a lovely spot on the bank of the river. While resting there we noticed several gazelles and ariels come down to the river's side to drink, within easy shot of where we were sitting; they all seemed very timid, and before daring to quench their thirst keenly scrutinized each rock or bush which might perchance conceal a hidden foe. They were apparently loath to trust themselves near the deep water, no doubt dreading the crocodiles with which the Settite abounds, and contented themselves with the warm water left in tiny pools by the daily receding river.

In the afternoon we again returned to the chase; and this time my brother obtained a snap-shot at the buffalo as he bolted through the trees, though with no apparent effect. After this we pursued him for a long way, and were on the point of giving up, when we came upon him, standing amongst mimosa-bushes so thick that we could scarcely distinguish his head from his tail. After vainly endeavouring to improve our position, we fired simultaneously; he charged furiously out into a more open place, and stood pawing the ground, with lowered head and snorting savagely. Momentarily expecting his charge, we reserved our second barrels for close quarters. As they say in diplomatic circles, "the position had become somewhat strained." A moment's intense anxiety, and he suddenly wheeled round, and once more tore through the bushes in undignified retreat, receiving a bullet from my ten-bore on his way. We did not feel sure in what part he had been wounded, but we followed the blood track until the rapidly decreasing daylight warned that it was time to desist; and, greatly disappointed, we acknowledged defeat, and turned our steps campward.

On our way we passed a large *zariba* containing a great many goats and sheep, and where the people were most obliging, insisting upon our imbibing huge draughts of milk, which did not require much pressing on their part, as we were extremely hot and thirsty. We arranged with them for a daily supply of milk during the remainder of our stay at Om Hagar. There is next to no twilight in these latitudes; darkness soon overtook us, and we found that it was indeed no joke to thread one's way amongst the vicious thorn-bushes with which our path was beset.

Lort Phillips had that afternoon caught a *gamoot* weighing thirty-one pounds; and Aylmer and Colvin had passed a long

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and exciting day after a herd of buffaloes on the opposite side of the river; and, although they had each wounded one, they failed to bring either to bag. A native whom they had taken with them had succeeded in spearing a calf, which had been left behind during the general stampede of the herd, so that a new delicacy in the shape of *veau sauvage* was that night added to our *menu.*

The following day Colvin and I went out together. We determined to try to take up again the tracks of yesterday's wounded bull. Vain endeavour! countless guinea-fowl had crossed and re-crossed the trail; and, although we found it every now and then, we lost it again almost directly. I never, either before or since, came across these birds in such numbers; the ground, for almost six miles, was literally covered with them. Past experience had taught us that it was next to useless to attempt sport where they were very numerous, as they are as great a plague to the African sportsman as ptarmigan or grouse frequently are to the deer-stalker in the Highlands. We pushed forward as quickly as possible, so as to get out of their region; and hardly had we done so, when we found fresh tracks of a small herd; these we pursued for some distance, until, finding that they were evidently bent on a long journey and travelling away from the river, we gave up the chase.

The same day Aylmer secured the first hippopotamus, a fair-sized bull. His first shot had, apparently, half-stunned it; but several more bullets were required before life was extinct. "Hippos" were scarce in that part of the Settite, and we did not care to shoot many; the flesh was, however, greatly appreciated by the Arabs, although we found it somewhat strong in flavour, and very tough. After having gorged themselves with as much of the fresh meat as they could manage to swallow,

they would cut up the remainder into strips, with which they festooned all the trees; this, when dried, was placed in skins, and afterwards cooked and eaten from time to time. The fat, when boiled down, formed a most excellent substitute for cooking-butter, which we were very glad to get, as the only butter we could obtain in the country possessed a most disgusting taste, principally owing to the fact of its being kept in badly cured goat-skins.

Then, too, the hide is most highly prized throughout the Soudan for the purpose of making the *koorbatch*, or native whip, of which we were told one skin, if carefully divided, would make upwards of two hundred. This statement, however, must be taken *cum grano*, as we never put it to the test. The hide, on the neck of a fine bull, is fully an inch and a half in thickness. Altogether, you cannot please your Arabs more than by shooting one of these useful animals.

The tusks are often very fine, and were at one time extensively used by dentists, in the manufacture of false teeth. I believe, however, that they have been superseded by the use of some composition. They make very nice trophies, and can be made up in various ways. At home we had some made into frames for mirrors, and they looked very well.

The natives secure these animals by means of harpoons, of which Sir Samuel Baker gives a most interesting account in "The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia," a book that served us as a sort of guide-book, and which we found contained a most accurate description of the country.

Owing to the comparative ease with which hippototami can be killed, they are rapidly becoming exterminated in this part of Africa. They are no longer found on the Nile farther north than the nineteenth degree of north latitude, and are nowhere plentiful north of Khartoum. Where there is cultiva-

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tion on the banks of the river, they do a great deal of damage. Near Berber, I have seen places where, every night, the natives sat up to protect their crops against their depredations. Along the river they stretched a rope, supported on poles, from which hung numerous bells, and which they pulled vigorously whenever a "hippo" made its appearance, in order to scare the unwelcome intruder back into the river.

Agriculture in these parts is indeed no sinecure; the husbandman has no peace night or day. All day long, vast flocks of doves, and small birds, cause havoc amongst his crops, and necessitate perpetual vigilance. One often sees boys perched upon lofty platforms, armed with slings, with which, accompanied by discordant cries, they endeavour to ward off their feathered foes.

A very considerable *khor*, called the Royan, joined the Settite some little distance to the westward of our encampment. My brothers, one day, rode across country, striking the Royan, some miles from its mouth; and there they found numbers of Arabs with their flocks, many of the men busily engaged in setting snares for any antelopes that might come to drink at any of the occasional pools of water that were to be found in its bed. As this would not have improved our chances of sport in that direction, and as it was evident that at that time Arabs were dwelling there in considerable numbers, none of us thought it worth while to go there again. On the way, however, my brothers saw great numbers of antelopes of different kinds, among others a herd of *mâârif*. These exceedingly wary animals almost invariably keep to the open plains, and are very difficult to approach. Neither of my brothers succeeded in bagging one. The utmost they could do was to obtain a galloping shot, at well over two hundred yards.

Soon after our arrival at Om Hagar, we sent a quantity of

dhurra to a Hamran village farther down the river, to be converted into flour; with it we sent a present of a handsome burnous, a small quantity of gunpowder, and a letter to the chief sheik of the Hamran tribe of Arabs, who was at that time dwelling there. The result was, that he sent his son to visit us, a very good-looking fellow, and well mannered except for his begging propensities. He was very anxious that we should bestow some present upon him, and begged very hard for a gun, and all kinds of things, and was very difficult to satisfy. He was profuse in his apologies for Said, and the other Hamrans at Meheteb, and informed us that it was a fact that Said's father had been killed by the Basé, a circumstance of which we had heard before. He declared that the Hamrans were friends with the Abyssinians, and that with their permission the Hamrans hunted elephants in their country, on the stipulation that any game shot in their territory was divided with them.

On the same evening, Mahomet Salee and one of our other old horsemen suddenly made their appearance, with two camels that we had sent from Haikota to Cassala, for some necessaries such as bread, sugar, and candles. These camels had left Achmed Ageer's headquarters for Cassala at the same time that we left for the Settite, and had been away far longer than they ought to have been. The same evening Mahomet Salee left our camp for Om Brega, to purchase *dhurra* on his own account, which he intended taking back with him to the Gash; as a peace-offering he brought us the skin of a boa-constrictor which he said he had killed on the road between Khor Meheteb and Haikota.

The same day news was brought into camp, that Colvin had killed a "hippo" three or four miles farther up the river. We despatched camels for the meat; and at the same time my

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brother William and I started with the photographic camera, intending to take its photograph. On arriving at the place we found a "hippo" in a large pool, rising, as is the habit of these animals, to the surface to breathe, and quickly disappearing again. The Arabs declared, however, that this was another animal; and that the one Colvin had shot was lying dead at the bottom of the river, and would soon rise to the surface. We waited a long time, hoping that this would be the case; and to pass the time I fished, but with indifferent success. I saw a number of turtles, which kept coming up to the top of the water, but could not catch one, and only managed to hook a *gamoot* of seven pounds.

Colvin left the pool, and went off with Aylmer. The latter shot a *méhedéhet* and a very fine buck *nellut;* and in returning to camp in the evening, Colvin obtained a snap-shot at a leopard, which he unfortunately missed; this was the more unlucky, as it was the first time any of us had had a shot at one. My brother Arthur went down to the pool where the "hippo" was, and, as there was no sign of Colvin's animal, shot our friend of the morning. Either it was the same one Colvin had fired at, and not killed; or else Colvin had wounded one, which managed to keep out of our sight by remaining under the bushes which grew very thick on one bank of the river, and overhung the water. At any rate, we saw no signs of any other, and, in fact, saw no more hippopotami during the remainder of our stay in the country. The following morning we found my brother's "hippo" floating, and, after towing it to land, took its photograph; it proved to be an old bull, with enormous tusks which had grown through the upper lip.

It is often very difficult, in shooting hippopotami, to determine whether or not your shot has been successful, as, hit or miss, the animal at once sinks below the surface, to float after

some two or three hours if killed; but if only wounded, or missed, he will frequently select so well-concealed a spot for his necessary re-appearance as to baffle his pursuers. The lungs of the hippopotamus are so constructed as to enable him to remain below the surface of the water for a period of from six to ten consecutive minutes, though when undisturbed they delight in remaining with their heads entirely above water, often for a considerable length of time; but when molested, they take care to show no more than the apertures of the nostrils, and their eyes, and that only for a few seconds, as they quickly fill their lungs with a fresh supply of oxygen, and sink again.

The vicinity of our camp was the daily resort of numerous marabou-storks, several of which we shot for the sake of their feathers. Any one, who had seen these birds in the numbers in which they occur in these parts of Africa, would fully appreciate the justice and accuracy of Mr. H. Stracey Mark's admirable picture entitled "In Convocation," which attracted so much attention at the Royal Academy two or three years ago.

We purchased from some Arabs, for a trifling sum, a gigantic land-tortoise, which we had intended to have presented to the Zoological Society of London; but the fates were against us, for a journey on camel-back proved more than his constitution could bear. He weighed almost as much as a man could lift. At night we fastened him with a strong chain to a heavy provision-box, which he would frequently drag several yards in his endeavours to escape. We never could perceive that he ate or drank any thing, although we tried him with every thing which we thought likely to tempt his palate. Even under these adverse circumstances, he, nevertheless, lived for some weeks, and gave no signs of failing strength, until one day we found him

dead. Colvin, however, succeeded in conveying to England a very diminutive specimen of what appeared to be the same species.

One day my brother William took his camera down to the *khor* to endeavour to photograph any antelopes or other animals that might come there. Both antelopes and baboons made their appearance; but, after successive attempts, he found it impossible so to arrange the camera as to be able to expose the plate without disclosing himself; accordingly, he discarded the camera for the rifle, and had the good fortune to secure the finest buck *nellut* that we obtained during the expedition. The horns of this magnificent animal measured thirty-nine and a half inches in a direct line from the base to the tip, and fifty-nine inches measuring round the curves.[1] "Every cloud has a silver lining:" the converse often, unfortunately, holds good. As he got up to leave his hiding-place towards dusk, he locked his rifle, preparatory to scrambling down a steep bank and through thick bushes. The noise he made disturbed a panther, which had approached unseen to within a few feet of his position, and which bounded into the jungle without even giving him time for a snap-shot.

The whole of our stay at Om Hagar was most enjoyable; and I think I cannot do better than give a few extracts from my diary of our last days there.

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[1] Mr. F. C. Selous, in his interesting book entitled "A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa," mentions shooting a specimen of this antelope, which he designates as perhaps the handsomest species in the world. The horns of this animal measured forty-three inches from base to tip, and sixty-four measuring round the curves. It was the largest he ever came across.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Extracts from Diary. — Bait set for Lions. — Mosquitoes. — Among the Buffaloes again. — Beginning of the Homeward Journey. — Journey towards Lacatecourah. — The Village of Lacatecourah. — A *Bonne Bouche*.

March 19. — William and I went out shooting together, and rode a long way on the south bank of the river. Saw one *māārif*, but miles off, and could not succeed in getting near it, and a few *tétél* and *nellut*, to which we paid no attention. I had a long shot at a *boos* (*Klipspringer oreotragus saltatrix*), which I unfortunately missed. This is the only antelope, I believe, that inhabits the part of the Soudan through which we travelled, that none of us ever shot. It is decidedly scarce, is larger than a gazelle, with long reddish hair, and has, for its size, big horns. Arthur saw either two or three lions, he could not say which. The first he caught a glimpse of as it vanished into some high grass, and, although he followed it, never saw it again; the second he saw almost at the same moment, but at the top of a hill about three hundred yards off; and the third he saw on returning towards camp over the same ground in the afternoon, and consequently could not be sure that it was not one of those he had seen in the morning. Owing to the thickness of the covert, and the hardness of the ground, it was impossible to follow them for any distance. Lions are rarely to be caught in this chance way.

On our return to camp in the afternoon, we found Arthur, who told us about the lions; and we immediately started off

ARRIVAL OF MEAT IN CAMP.

again to endeavour to shoot an antelope, which we wished to use as a bait for them. Although usually, when we did not want them, we could obtain one or two without much difficulty, we were on this occasion obliged to return by nightfall without having even had one shot. We thought, that, by leaving a dead antelope near the place where Arthur had seen the lions, one or more might visit it during the night; in which case, on the following morning, there would be the chance of finding one not far from the carcase, gorged with its banquet. Aylmer had spent the day by the water in the *khor*, and had shot a doe *māārif*, and two fine buck *nellut;* not bad, as all had heads well worth preserving. On his arrival in camp with the spoil, we sent one of the latter to what we hoped would prove the trysting-place of the lions.

"To-day the atmosphere has been clear again; but the two previous days were so misty that the sun was partly in shade. The temperature, both night and day, has been much cooler; and we have had very strong gales at night, which tried the tent-ropes.

"The mosquitoes bother us a good deal after the sun has gone down, — a plague we have not experienced before this winter, except to a slight extent at Souakim. These torments need hardly enter into one's calculations in undertaking a journey into these parts; on the few occasions that one meets with them in any number, they appear to be very local. I found them very troublesome at Sofi, a village on the banks of the Atbara, near its junction with the Settite, although we were encamped very high above the river, and there was nothing to account for their presence in that part more than in any other. This was the place chosen by Sir Samuel Baker in which to spend the rainy season; and he mentions their extreme virulence in "The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia." Of course it was not to

be wondered at, that they should be very troublesome during the rains; but, as I found them so great a plague there during the driest season of the year, it is very probable that they were thicker there during the rains than at other places.

"*March* 20. — Went very early to see if any lions had visited Aylmer's dead *nellut*, but found no signs of its having been disturbed. We are daily supplied with milk by some people who have made a large *zariba* on the north bank of the river, and have a great number of goats. The 'proprietor' came early this morning to inform us that last night a lion had had the impudence to jump over the *zariba*, and carry away a goat. Colvin and I started in pursuit, hoping to be able to follow the depredator; we soon found where he had jumped over the prickly hedge, and the marks made by the wretched goat he had dragged with him. Achmet tracked him across the river, and for a long distance on the other side; but we finally lost the marks of his footsteps in thick bushes, and were forced to abandon the pursuit.

"We, however, found tracks of buffalo that had drunk last night at the river; and these we followed a long way from the Settite, and finally got up to them in a '*kittar*' forest. They were all lying down tail to tail, but rose to their feet when we got to within a hundred to a hundred and thirty yards of them. We both singled out what appeared to be big ones, and fired; the whole herd made off with a tremendous crash through the bushes, but none fell. We ran round, and tried to cut them off as they made for the river. We could have fired again, but abstained from doing so, as they would have been long shots, that could have only wounded them. After following for some distance, we found we had each wounded one; they lagged behind the rest of the herd, which was evidently going slowly on their account. A little farther, and the only wounded beast

that left a distinct blood-track separated from the others; and we followed it for some distance, until the sun going down warned us that it was useless to go any farther that night, and we returned to camp.

"William and Lort Phillips had been out together, and had followed a herd of buffaloes which had been drinking and splashing in the river opposite our camp last night. They went a long way in the Meheteb direction, and separated, as the latter was following a bull. He could not get near it, and, having lost his reckoning, whistled, which startled the herd as William was getting near it; and the buffaloes galloped off without his obtaining the chance of a shot. Later in the day William wounded one, but not badly; and, as the afternoon was too far advanced to allow of his following it, he gave it up. Arthur watched the pool of water in the *khor*, and was rewarded by shooting two wart-hogs and a buck *nellut*, the latter of which he sent, as a bait for lions, to a spot where we frequently saw their marks.

"*March* 21. — Sent George out for a day's shooting; and he got a very large *tétél*, and a gazelle, and wounded a *méhédéhet*, which he lost. Arthur and William went to see if any lions had touched the *nellut*, but found no traces of any having done so. Lort Phillips watched 'the water,' and succeeded in shooting a small buck *nellut*. Colvin and I took up the tracks of our wounded buffalo of yesterday; and, after going for about a quarter of a mile from where we had given up the pursuit last night, we found a place where it had evidently been careering about. Achmet at once declared that it had been attacked by hyænas. Very soon we espied it quite dead. It was a large cow, which, in the thickness of the *kittar*-bushes, we had easily mistaken for a bull.

"There were the marks of several hyænas on the ground, and

they had torn the poor brute's hind-quarters all to pieces. It was quite evident, from the way in which the ground was torn up by the buffalo's hoofs, that the hyænas had attacked it while alive, and that it had made a desperate struggle to defend itself before giving in. We left a camel and some men with the carcase, and started to find the herd. We had no difficulty in taking up their tracks from where we had left them yesterday, and found, too, the blood-marks of the other wounded animal; but these we soon lost again. We spent a very long, hot day, in the pursuit of this herd; the wind was generally wrong, and it was not until after much crawling through long grass, and dodging from tree to tree, that late in the afternoon we either of us succeeded in obtaining a shot; it was a long one, and the buffalo went off wounded. Again, after a short pursuit, the setting sun obliged us to desist, and we returned to camp.

"*March* 22. — Started early after our wounded buffalo, which we had left not far from camp; its tracks were difficult to follow, and very soon crossed those of the herd. However, we were not long in finding the wounded animal, which unfortunately proved to be another cow, a very old one, with a fine head. She had retreated into thick covert near the river, and a ball in the shoulder at fifty yards brought her to bag. A crowd of Hamrans had followed us, eager for meat; and as we had plenty in camp, and were, moreover, shifting our quarters, we gave most of it away. One piece of hide, sufficient to make a shield, we exchanged for some small 'hippo's' teeth.

"This is the first day of our return homewards. We marched to the water in Khor Meheteb, encamping near the place where we had previously sat up watching for game. Lort Phillips, who is very fond of fishing, tried the Settite for the last time on the expedition, and caught a *gamoot* weighing twenty-five pounds. Arthur shot a small crocodile.

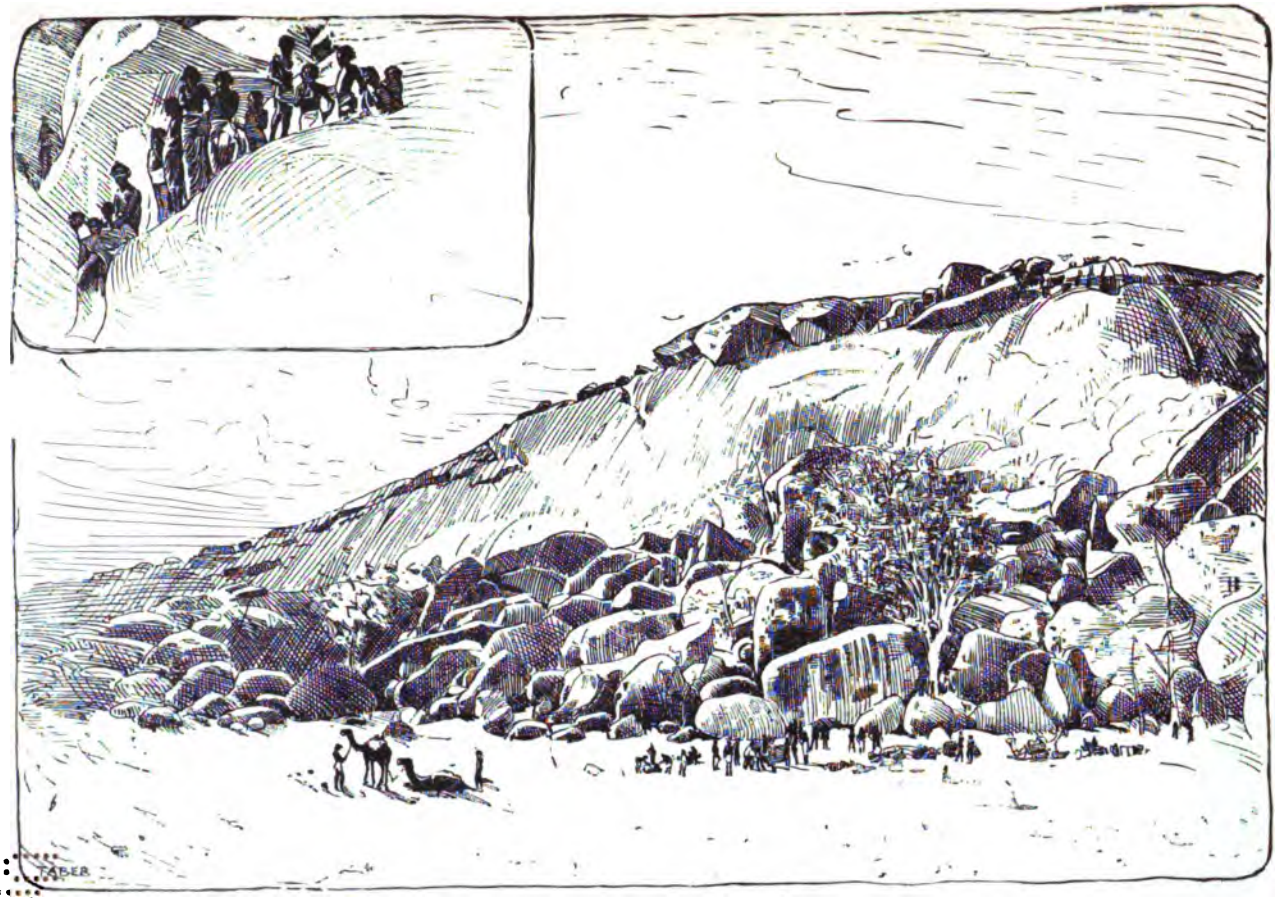
"We turned our backs on the river with many regrets; for, although much disappointed at being baffled in our attempt to explore farther up the river, we had, nevertheless, greatly enjoyed our stay on its banks, and had obtained better sport than we had expected in the Hamran country.

"I trust some day we shall make a regular expedition into Abyssinia, from Massawa, having first obtained the necessary letters from King John, authorising us to do so, and that then we shall be able to shoot along the Settite farther up the river, and perhaps travel along its banks as far as we now are on Khor Meheteb."

It was dark before Colvin and I joined the others in our new camp, and we found them just sitting down to dinner.

We had now to go through much the same kind of journey, to get back to Haikota, that we had performed to reach the Settite; but we were determined to pass through the Basé village of Lacatecourah on our return. Our Arabs declared we should get there by nightfall; but knowing by constant experience how unreliable they were in all their statements, we insisted on having the barrels and water-skins filled up before making a start.

Although we rose at daybreak, it was 9.30 before the caravan was under way. The "road" was fairly good, and we had not to make our way through half as thick woods as those we had to force the camels through in going to the Settite; there was a slightly defined footpath most if not all the way, and there was really no excuse for the camel-drivers to lose themselves. In Khor Meheteb we found that elephants had drunk there three days before our arrival; it seemed as though we were never destined to have an opportunity of shooting any. The country was, of course, most monotonous; but we were fortunate in having a very agreeable day for travelling, as there



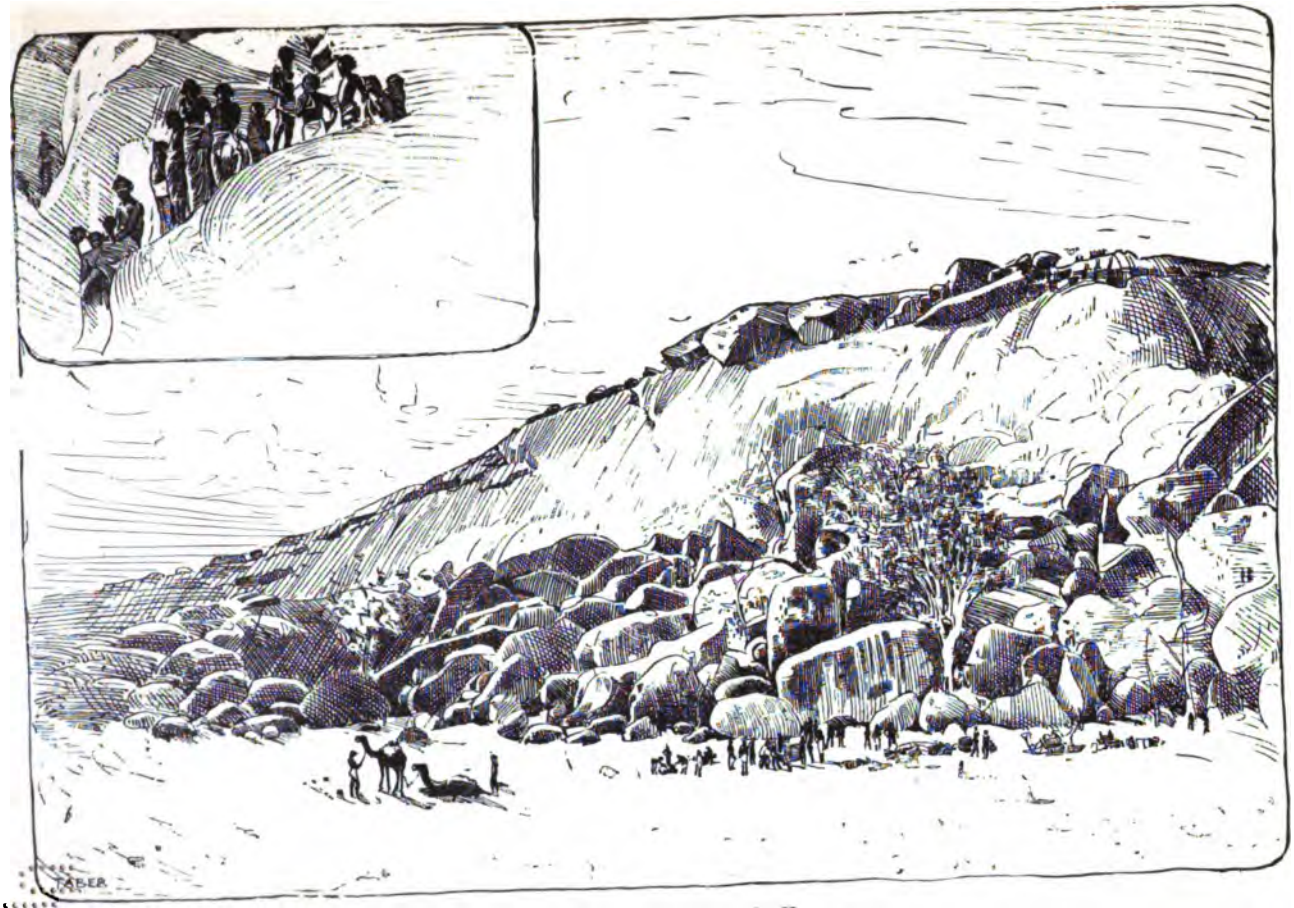
ROCKS AT LACATECOURAH.

were clouds floating about which frequently shaded the sun. The sunset was lovely; the first fine one we had enjoyed since leaving the neighbourhood of Souakim. At the time of year in which we were travelling, clouds were rare, and the sunsets consequently lacked variety.

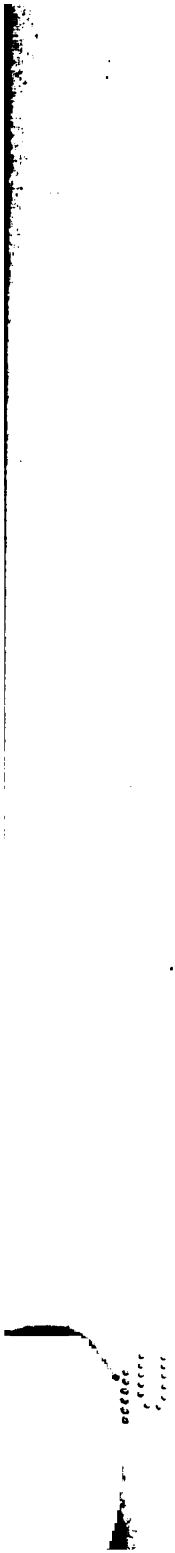
We reached the foot of the hill on which Lacatecourah is built, at 6.45, leaving the caravan far behind. This hill, which is some four or five hundred feet high, is covered with great granite boulders; and the village is the largest we had seen of those belonging to the Basé. We saw lights from the huts above us, and after a good deal of shouting some men came down to us. The water which supplied the village was some distance farther; but as we had plenty coming on with the caravan, and the night was very dark, and trees thick, we decided on remaining where we were, and waiting for the camels to overtake us.

After some two or three hours, Mahoom and several of the native servants arrived, and reported the caravan as miles behind. There were some very awkward places for the camels to pass, *khors* with very steep banks to be crossed, and in one of these a camel had stuck fast for a long time, causing great delay. About 11.30 or 12, the next contingent made its appearance, consisting of George, and, most important personage of all, Ali the cook, with a number of camels in their train. They had with them a "guide" we had engaged on the Settite to show us the way, but he evidently knew nothing about it. We lost no time in helping Ali to light a fire, and get his cooking-pots started, and soon pitched one of the tents.

The bulk of the camels, together with Suleiman, did not make their appearance until nine o'clock the next morning, having completely lost their reckoning, as well as the apology for a path that there was; and having wandered to the back of the



ROCKS AT LACATECOURAH.



hill on which the village of Lacatecourah is situated, which prevented their seeing the pyrotechnic display in which we indulged the previous evening, on hearing that they were lost. We found the nights, away from the river, much colder, and were very glad of our blankets. My horse, which had lasted better than any of the others, began to show signs of a sore back. No amount of care bestowed on our horses seemed to stop this, and sooner or later they all suffered in the same way. More of our camels gave out also. Two days previously one had died of that mysterious disease, the *guffer;* and on the journey from Khor Meheteb two had had to be left behind.

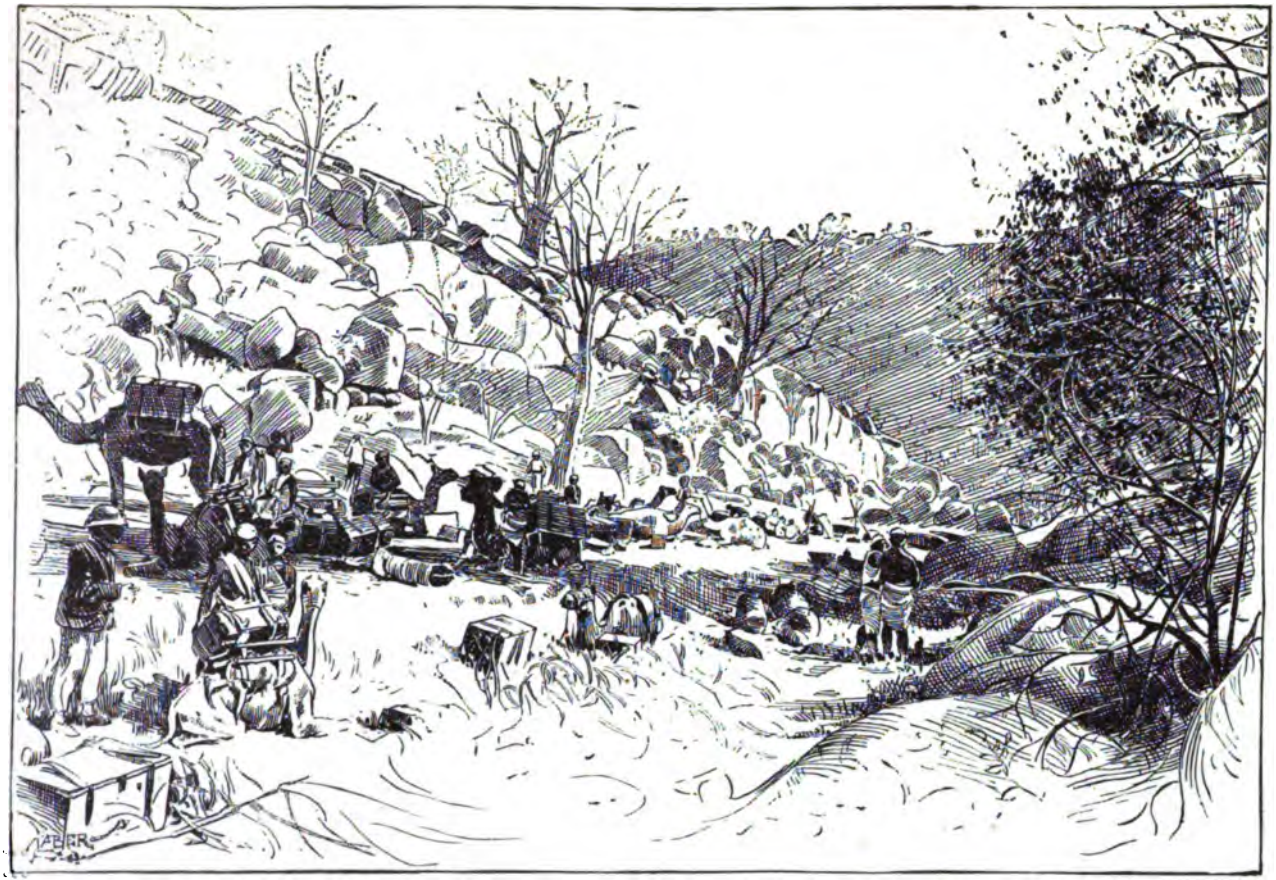
In the morning we thoroughly explored the village, which was most curious. A primitive portcullis-like gate, near the foot of the hill, gave access to a steep path, up which we climbed; huts were built at about half way up to the top. There seemed to be almost a greater number of women than men; and we greatly delighted many of them, by presenting them with glass beads, *kohl* for their eyes, and looking-glasses, while among the men we distributed a large number of knives. Some of the women's heads were remarkable objects, beads of all shapes and colours being regularly worked into the hair.

The view from the top of the hill, or rock, for it is not much more, is extensive, but by no means beautiful; a great plain covered chiefly by leafless trees does not constitute a lovely prospect. From one of the Basé we bought a baby baboon to add to our menagerie, which already consisted of two small green monkeys and a tortoise.[1] We decided on moving the camp to some wells in a *khor*, about an hour farther on, called Abou Sellal, and remaining there for the day to allow the camels time to rest and feed. We felt we had a long journey

[1] We succeeded in bringing all these animals to England alive.

before us to the coast, and that the camels were not in good condition, and would require great care to enable them to accomplish it. I went off with some of the party to see the place that supplied the village with water. We had sent some camels there to fetch some, but they had not returned; and, on our arrival, we found they had gone on to other wells farther off, where the water was said to be better. After waiting an hour or two for them, they made their appearance; and we all went on together to the camping-ground.

As an instance of what the Basé will eat: while waiting at these wells for the camels, we noticed one pare off bits of hide from his sandals, some of which he ate as they were; but his friend, who was sitting by him engaged in the same occupation, and who was evidently a *bon-vivant*, first pounded up the pieces of sandal with a stone before consuming them!



BREAKING UP CAMP AT ABOU SELLAL.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Encampment at Abou Sellal. — A native of the Basé Settite. — A Dabergoum Sheik offers to conduct us to the Basé Settite. — Basé Villages on the Settite. — Capture of a Boa-constrictor. — Arrival at Haikota. — The Beni-Amer's Raid on the Basé. — A Visit from Sheik Achmed Ageer. — His Lame Apologies.

We found our camping-ground, Abou Sellal, a rather picturesque spot, situated in a deep sandy *khor* between hills. Crowds of Basé belonging to some other village were there drawing water, and did not seem at all afraid of us.

I made great efforts, both at this village and especially at Lacatecourah, to endeavour to find out something more about the Basé villages, their names, and whether there were really any situated on the Settite above where we had been. The information I received was most contradictory, but I give it for what it is worth. In travelling in Africa, one can only feel sure of what one really sees with one's own eyes; and "native report," that one reads so much about in African books of travel, must be taken very much *cum grano*.

My experience of the inhabitants of Africa I have come across is, that they will frequently lie for the mere pleasure (for to them, I suppose, it *is* a pleasure) of lying; and they will often do so when there is, apparently, nothing to be gained by it.

The moot-question, of whether any Basé have permanent habitations on the Settite, or not, will, I believe, never be settled by us. My impression is, however, that they have villages,

either close to the river, or at a very short distance back from it. They always build their villages on hills; and the country above Khor Meheteb is suitable for them in this respect, as there are hills on both banks of the river, generally close to it, besides hills standing back at some distance. It is not at all unlikely, however, that the Abyssinians have forced them to abandon some of their villages, as, we were told, had lately been the case. In answer to my numerous inquiries, I was told that Toansar and Beergayla were both on the river. There is no doubt that there are such places, and that they are Basé villages. One man declared that the former was two days' journey from Lacatecourah; another, five.

There was a path running into ours, on our way from Khor Meheteb, which one authority said led into Abyssinia, and was used by the Abyssinians when they organised raids against Lacatecourah; another stated that it merely led to another Basé village, now deserted, and that the inhabitants had fled to Lacatecourah, on account of the too close proximity of Abyssinia being disagreeable for them.

I told Suleiman to be on the look-out for "information" about the Basé for me; and at Abou Sellal he informed me that a man had arrived on the scene from this very debatable "Basé Settite." He had a long yarn to spin, and was most communicative. His story (which, in part, we had heard before) was to the effect that some Sogada people had stolen five women from a Basé village called Dabergoum.

In these countries, the fair — or what I should perhaps term the dusky — sex are regarded as property, and are looked upon in much the same light as so many head of cattle or sheep. Dabergoum he described as on the Settite, the nearest Basé village up the river above Khor Meheteb. He told us that his father came from Haikota, but that his mother was a Sogada

lady; and that he had been sent by the Egyptian Government to endeavour to extort taxes from Sogada, Lacatecourah, and two other villages. What they could possibly pay, I cannot imagine, as poorer people could not easily be found. If his story were true, which I doubt, he would probably endeavour to cajole the people into paying something, by promising them various advantages if they complied with his demands, and threatening them with what would happen if they did not. He said he had sent to Dabergoum, to tell them that, if they would send to Sogada for them, the women would be restored to their rightful lords.

We were shown a man, said to be a sheik of Dabergoum, on his way to Sogada to fetch the ladies, and who, hearing of the presents that other Basé had received from us, came to make our acquaintance, and offered, if we would turn back, to take us to that mystic region, the "Basé Settite." He described the shooting there as good, and said that there were ten villages between the Hamran country and Abyssinia, all of which paid taxes to King John. Some of these villages, he told us, were on the river, others some distance off in the mountains, but all situated on the right bank. Toansar and Beergayla were absolutely on the river. Dabergoum was four days' journey from Meheteb, but there were Abyssinians dwelling half-way between.

He gave me the following names of ten villages, which I give, as nearly as I could catch the names, and the order in which they come, beginning from Meheteb. The first two are off the river in the mountains. Dabergoum, Tola, Takerlumba, Beergayla, Ownseba, Usaba, Fora, Toansar, Kundigayla, Anāla. I think this information is very likely pretty correct, and it impressed me at the time as having the air of truth about it.

Only two days before our arrival at Abou Sellal, some ele-

phants had passed, and one had been killed close to our camp; there was no mistake about it, as we saw the remains of its skeleton quite fresh.

The next day's march took us to Sogada, and we encamped on the same spot we had chosen in going south. It was a long day's journey, and some of the men lagged behind with their camels, and lost themselves again. We made one halt before reaching Haikota, choosing Fahncoob again as a camping-ground.

On our way we came across the trail of a snake, which we followed; and, after tracking it for some time, we discovered a boa-constrictor, ten feet long, curled up under a *kittar*-bush, which we shot with a revolver. We preserved the skin. It was the only one we ever came upon, though we not infrequently saw their marks on the ground, and sometimes traced them a long way.

On March 27 we were back at Haikota again, for the third time. We heard full particulars of the raid made by the people of that place on the Basé at Sarcelle; and I give them as they were given to me by some of the Beni-Amers that we had with us, and who represented themselves as being present at the time. I fully believe the main details of the story. Those who told us about it considered that they had behaved in a perfectly humane and natural manner, and never doubted for a moment but that we should think so too.

Sarcelle is a large village, and, like most Basé villages, built on a hill. As soon as the Beni-Amers made their appearance, the inhabitants retreated into a cave in the mountain, which their enemies immediately surrounded. After standing a siege of four or five days, five Basé men emerged from the cave, as they were getting pressed for food and water; and these men were no sooner seen, than they were killed by spears. The

next day four women and two men appeared; the former they kept, but killed the men. As fast as any people appeared, if men, they were killed; if women, or quite young children, they were made prisoners. Many died of hunger and thirst in the cave; but between one and two hundred men were put to death, while upwards of a hundred and sixty women, as well as a great number of children, were taken off. The women were apportioned out as slaves or wives; what became of the children, I did not learn; but we saw some of the women on our return to Haikota, and others, we were told, had been sent off to other villages. The Basé women look very strong, and appear to do most of the hard work.

We reached Haikota before our caravan; and while we were at luncheon in the *zariba* of the German, who we found had fled, Sheik Achmed Ageer arrived to pay us a visit. He endeavoured to appear as though nothing had happened to displease us, but his manner was evidently constrained. We taxed him with his duplicity, and told him how indignant we were with him for having deceived us. His excuses were very lame; and he tried to throw the blame on Mahomet Salee, to whom he declared he had given instructions to take us to Lacatecourah in the first instance, and there arrange with the sheik to go on to Toansar and Beergayla. He acknowledged that these were Basé villages, and that both they and other villages were on the Settite. His throwing the whole blame on Mahomet Salee was of course nonsense; as the latter acted under his orders, whatever they were, and dared not disregard them.

Of the five sick camels that we had left behind in his care, he said that two had died from snake-bite, and that the other three were well. When they made their appearance, however, we found that they were very far from well; and, although we

started with them, none reached the coast. One died on the first or second day's march; and the others we gave away, in hopes that they might pick up if given a further rest. Probably the two that had "died from snake-bite" were the only two that had sufficiently recovered to be of much use, and had been appropriated by the sheik himself. We told him that we should require to hire some more camels to go to the coast; and these he promised to get for us in a day or two.

The two following days we spent at Haikota, arranging for a start. We went out partridge shooting, but with indifferent success. When we left for the Settite, there had been plenty of grass about; but, on our return, we found that for miles around, it was all eaten up, — every blade of it, — by the flocks and herds of the Arabs. In this, those of the Beni-Amers had been assisted by the animals of other tribes. And the sheik told us that he had lately been paid six hundred sheep as a tax by Sheik Moosa's people (the Hadendowa sheik) for allowing their sheep to graze on his land.

Achmed Ageer was most anxious to make friends with us again, and hung about the camp all day. He stated that he was sending Mahomet Salee off to Gedariff (a large place, some days' journey off, to the south-west); and the latter came to us one evening while we were at dinner, apparently in a great state of mind, and told us that he had only done what the sheik had told him to do, and begged us to take him with us to Massawa. We told him, however, that we could not forgive his duplicity; and declined to have any thing further to do with him.

All the camel-drivers we had brought from Cassala, as well as the boys who had charge of the horses, declined to go any farther, and wanted to go home; the only exception being En-noor, — a boy we had engaged at Cassala to help look

after the horses. He was a great friend of Achmet's, whom I have mentioned as being so good a tracker. Achmet had come with us all the way from Souakim, and had stuck to us when his companions left on our arrival at Cassala; and we promised to take him with us by sea from Massawa to Souakim, as well as En-noor, if he wished to go.

I should further mention an exception among the camel-drivers. Yacoub, a poor boy who suffered dreadfully from guinea-worm in the leg, was anxious to go with us. He would never allow the doctor to try an operation, but twice permitted him to draw off the matter that used to accumulate about the knee-joint; after which, for some time, he was able to go about and look after his camels, apparently without pain.

Most of the camel-drivers we should have dismissed at Haikota, whether they had wished to go or not; for a more idle, incompetent set of fellows it would be difficult to find. The head man among them, although knowing very little about camels and their ailments, worked very hard all the time, and did his best for us. We rewarded him by giving him a horse that was not worth taking on any farther. Colvin's horse, the "Wandering Monk," had previously made the sheik of Sogada happy for life. Sheik Achmed Ageer was anxious to buy Lort Phillips's riding-camel, for which he began by offering him five dollars and an old camel that was quite worthless, and ended by offering thirty-five dollars; but he would not part with it.

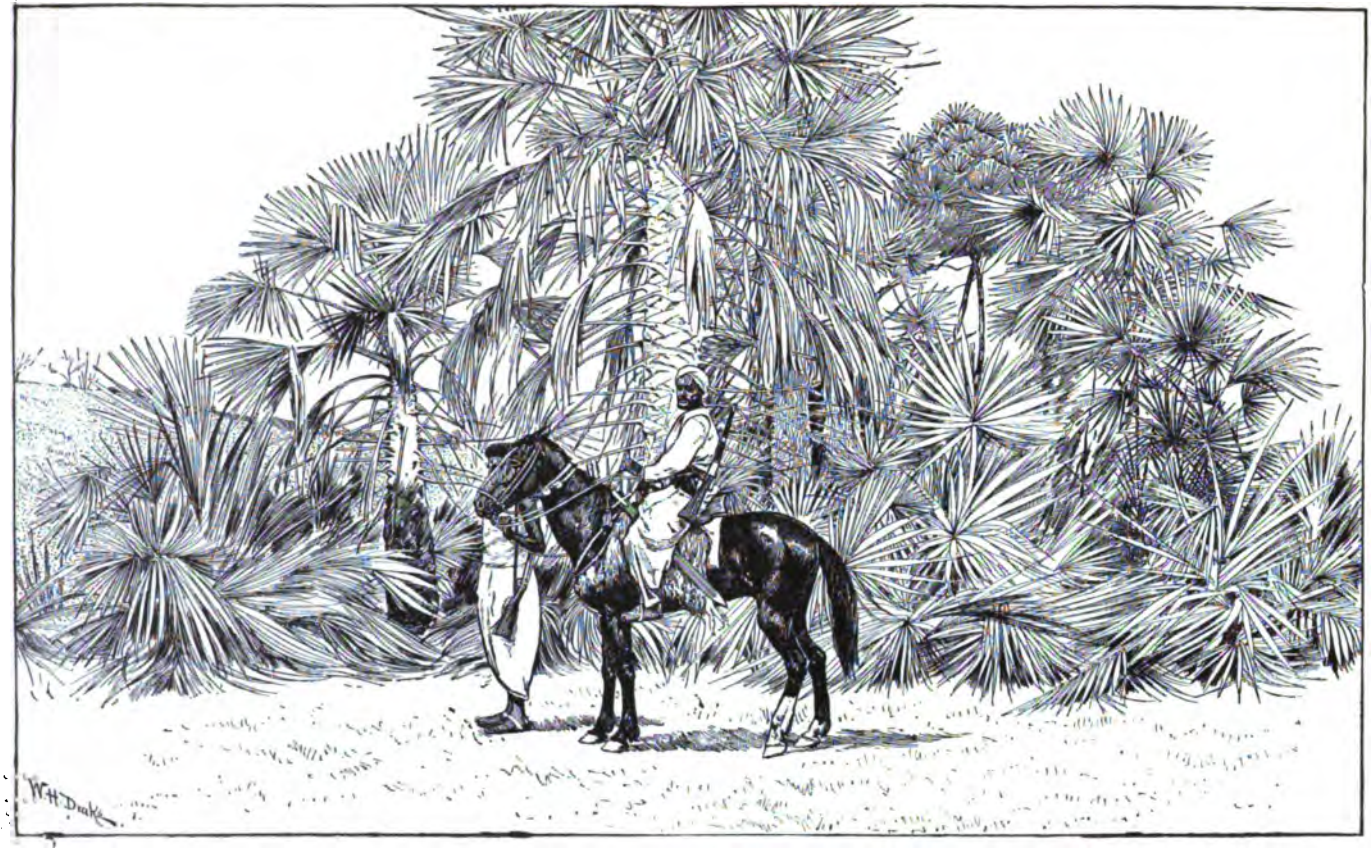
On the 30th we moved on to Toadelook, our old quarters. From there the road turns off to Amedeb, for which place we were bound; and, having two or three days longer to wait, we thought we could not better employ our time than by waiting there. It seemed, too, to be a last and decidedly favourable opportunity for adding a lion to our bag, as the moon was full, and the Arabs declared that there were plenty of these ani-

mals in the neighbourhood, attracted by the immense herds of cattle there at the time.

We managed to move nearly all our luggage with us, but knew that on our arrival at Amedeb we should lose the six camels we had hired from that place. Originally we had had eight, but two had died. For such a long journey, it was, moreover, prudent to travel lightly laden, and have a spare camel or two so as to avoid delays *en route*. My horse had completely given in, a frightfully sore back preventing the possibility of his being ridden. For a long journey, however, I far prefer a camel, so that in any case I should have kept one for my own riding.

The sheik was greatly offended, because on his coming to us in the morning, to ask whether he should accompany us to Toadelook, I answered that he might do as he liked, and also declined his offer of more goats for the journey. He wished us to leave behind any that were not giving a good supply of milk, saying he would change them for those that were. This opened up the old sore about the Settite, and caused him to spin another yarn. He declared that it was eight or nine years since he had been there, and that then he went to fight the inhabitants of Toansar and Beergayla; that he had told Mahomet Salee to arrange for us with the inhabitants of Lacatecourah, as the Sogada people had nothing to do with those on the river, and the others had. He said that Mahomet Salee had been afraid to go; he was from Cassala, and had only been three months at Haikota, and had told him that he was thoroughly conversant with the Settite above Khor Meheteb. He further stated that our servants and camel-drivers had all been afraid to go, and had urged this on Mahomet Salee.

We took all this for what it was worth, though there was no doubt as to the truth of the latter statement. We had not



SHEIK AT TOADELOOK.

been nearly careful enough in making our arrangements with Sheik Achmed Ageer before starting. The fact was, that, as he had done what we wanted him to do for us on our first expedition, we had had no reason to doubt that he would be equally sincere and truthful in his statements about the Settite. We should have told him in the first instance, that we would only pay for his guides *on condition* that they took us to some definite place, such as Toansar or Beergayla; and, had we done so, I am pretty confident that we should have got there.

The sheik declared that the people in those places would have been glad to see us, that the shooting there was very good, and that the previous year some of his own people had been there in pursuit of game. I have no doubt that our expedition up the Mareb opened up the country there very much for his hunters. He said that in a month's time Bayrumphy, with some of his hunters, intended going to Sheik Kudul, who would make an arrangement for them with the chief of Addy Abou in Abyssinian territory, enabling them to shoot elephants between that part and Gebel Bokutan. He was most anxious that we should come out to his country another winter; and promised, if we would write to him in advance, or telegraph even to Cassala, from whence the message would be forwarded, to make arrangements for us both with the Basé and Abyssinians. I should not, however, care to trust him again; and if we decide on visiting that part of the country another time, we should prefer to try it from the Abyssinian side, going in from Massawa.

We half accepted his apologies, and consented to his accompanying us on our journey to Toadelook. It was long after dark before we arrived, owing to a late start; and we pitched our tents on the old spot above the river's bed.

CHAPTER XXV.

Immense Flocks and Herds. — Night Watch for Liors. — Two Panthers killed. — Two Lions bagged. — The Camp moves on. — Religion of the Basé. — Origin of various African Tribes.

I NEVER saw any thing like the flocks and herds that were in the country. Cattle, sheep, and goats were there in thousands. We were told there were over five thousand head of cattle alone, and the number of sheep and goats must have been far greater. In a country like this, the labour of watering these large flocks and herds is very great. Wells have to be dug in the bed of the *khor*, often to the depth of from ten to twenty feet, with the hands, for they possess no such implements as spades; and, to prevent the soft sand from falling in, they have to be lined with boughs, palm-leaves, etc. When the wells are finished, a quantity of dry clay is brought from the banks; and after being carefully kneaded and puddled, it is finally made into huge basins with raised sides, much resembling sponge-baths. These basins are, of course, made at the mouth of the wells, and filled with water. When the cattle and goats arrive, instead of rushing immediately in a body to quench their thirst, which would of course result in the trampling-down and destruction of these clay drinking-troughs, the animals are trained to approach the water in turn, no more being allowed to go at a time than can conveniently drink together. It was a most curious and interesting sight to watch; and, if I had not seen it with my own eyes, I should be slow to believe that

these vast herds could be kept under such control. The Arab shepherds, instead of driving, "lead their flocks;" and all carry the proverbial crook, which in their case is used to shake down the dry pods of the mimosa, and the fruit of the *hegleek* and *nebbuk* trees, of all of which the sheep and goats are very fond.

We heard lions roaring at night; but as it was late, and we were all tired, we decided to wait till the morrow before going after them. The next morning we arranged that four of us should spend the night in different places, on the watch for them; and that the remaining two should pass it at a place in the mountains, called Hademdumi, where there was some water in a narrow *khor*, and where we were told we should have a very good chance. None of us had ever been there, and we drew lots who should go; the choice fell on Lort Phillips and myself.

We started off in a south-west direction, and, after going for some twelve or fourteen miles, found ourselves at our destination. The water was no more than a good-sized well dug by the Arabs in the bed of the *khor*, and filled to a level with it; and there was plenty of tall dried grass in the neighbourhood. The Beni-Amers had not yet moved there with their flocks, but intended doing so as soon as they had exhausted the grass in the neighbourhood of Toadelook.

We were disappointed at finding some Haikota people near there. They had constructed a good-sized ambush out of the leaves of the *dhoum*-palm, on the bank beneath a tree, just over the water, and four or five feet above it. The previous night, one of them had killed the largest bull buffalo I think I ever saw, close by the water; he had come down to drink. We were told, that, after the buffalo had been killed, a lion had made his appearance, but had left without their having fired at him.

We were of course far more anxious to shoot a lion than a

buffalo. We saw at once, that, with such a smell of flesh about, there was no chance of a buffalo or a giraffe approaching the water. They had already cut the flesh of the buffalo into strips, with which the bushes were covered. After discussing some luncheon inside the hollow trunk of an immense baobab-tree, I sallied forth to try and secure an antelope as bait: after a long stalk I luckily shot a large bull *tétél*. This we dragged to within about forty yards of our shelter, where we proposed passing the night. Soon after dark we ensconced ourselves inside the ambush. The moon was very brilliant, and it was most exciting work watching for the lion we hoped might appear. Our first visitors consisted of three little jackals; and we heard them barking in the bushes, very like dogs, some time before they ventured to approach the water. When they did appear, we did not disturb them; but watched them as they drank at the well, and tore at the carcase, barking all the while. When they had eaten and drunk their fill, they took their departure; and in about ten minutes more a far larger animal made its appearance. We took it to be a leopard or a panther. Lort Phillips fired, but unluckily missed; and the animal, uttering an angry growl, scampered off into the bushes. We cursed our bad luck, and decided that next time we would both fire together. Another quarter of an hour had barely elapsed, before the same animal returned. Both fired; it stood still for a second, and we feared we had missed again. Then it made for the bank, which, we could hear by its cries, it was not able to ascend, and it lay all night in the *khor*. We felt sure that the leopard, or whatever it might be, was mortally wounded, as we could occasionally hear it groan; and we felt confident that we should secure it in the morning. Another hour of anxious watching, and what we took for a lion made its appearance.

It is very difficult to judge of animals in the moonlight, as it has the effect of making them look nearly double their size. Our new friend roared, as we thought, just like a lion, and was answered by angry growls from the wounded animal by the bank. As soon as he got broadside to the carcass, we both fired; with a roar, he sprang up the side, into the *dhoum*-palm bushes, without giving us the chance of another shot. There we heard him groan, every now and then, throughout the night. We quite thought we had shot a lion and a lioness; we felt sure the second was a lion, and that the first, which we had taken for a leopard, must be his mate.

No more beasts of the forest visited us that night; and, as soon as day dawned, we descended from our perch, to see the result of the night's work. We found the first beast was a small male panther; and after first carefully ascertaining that the "lion," as we felt sure it was, had not gone through the bushes, and up the bank above them, we searched for traces of blood, which we soon found in abundance. We were not long in tracking our "lion;" which proved, to our disappointment, to be a large panther, lying quite dead in the bushes. We had both hit each panther, so we took one apiece; and, having cleaned them, we put them on a camel, that we might take them to camp as they were. On our way back, I left Lort Phillips to go on with the panthers, and turned off to the right, taking an Arab with me, in the hope of seeing some game. I came across the marks of several giraffes: the country looked perfect for them, — plenty of covert, and any number of green trees. I had a shot at a large kind of wildcat, which I missed; and then climbed to the top of a hill to view the surrounding country, in the hope of seeing game. I had no sooner reached the top, than I espied a lion lying under the shade of a tree, at about two or three hundred yards distance.

Carefully taking its bearings, I lost no time in descending, in the hope of a shot; in this, however, I was disappointed, for I never saw it again. The animal must have seen me on the hill, and made off. Unluckily, the ground was so hard and stony, that its feet had left no impression; but in any case, it would, most likely, have betaken itself to some thick covert, where I should have lost all trace of it. This was the first lion I had seen this year; for I did not get a glimpse of those I went after with Lort Phillips and Aylmer, on the Settite. The only other I saw during my travels in Africa was at Furfur, on the borders of the Dembelas country; and on that occasion, also, none of us obtained a shot.

Before arriving in camp, I heard that the others had shot two lions; and, on getting there, I was delighted to find the news was true. My brothers were the fortunate sportsmen, each having bagged one. All four of the party that had remained at Toadelook had spent the night in watching; they had each chosen a different spot, near where they imagined, from the tracks they found, the lions might pass on their way to drink at the water. They had made small *zaribas* under bushes, in which they sat, each with a native holding a spare rifle. Immediately in front of the *zariba*, a sheep was tied as bait, without the game. Neither Aylmer nor Colvin was fortunate enough to see any lions, though they were roaring round them all night. My brother Arthur posted himself near the water, and William beneath a bush in an open space, to which paths frequented by lions led in all directions; and he had in fact, that very morning, seen the tracks of five, passing close by the bush he selected to sit under.

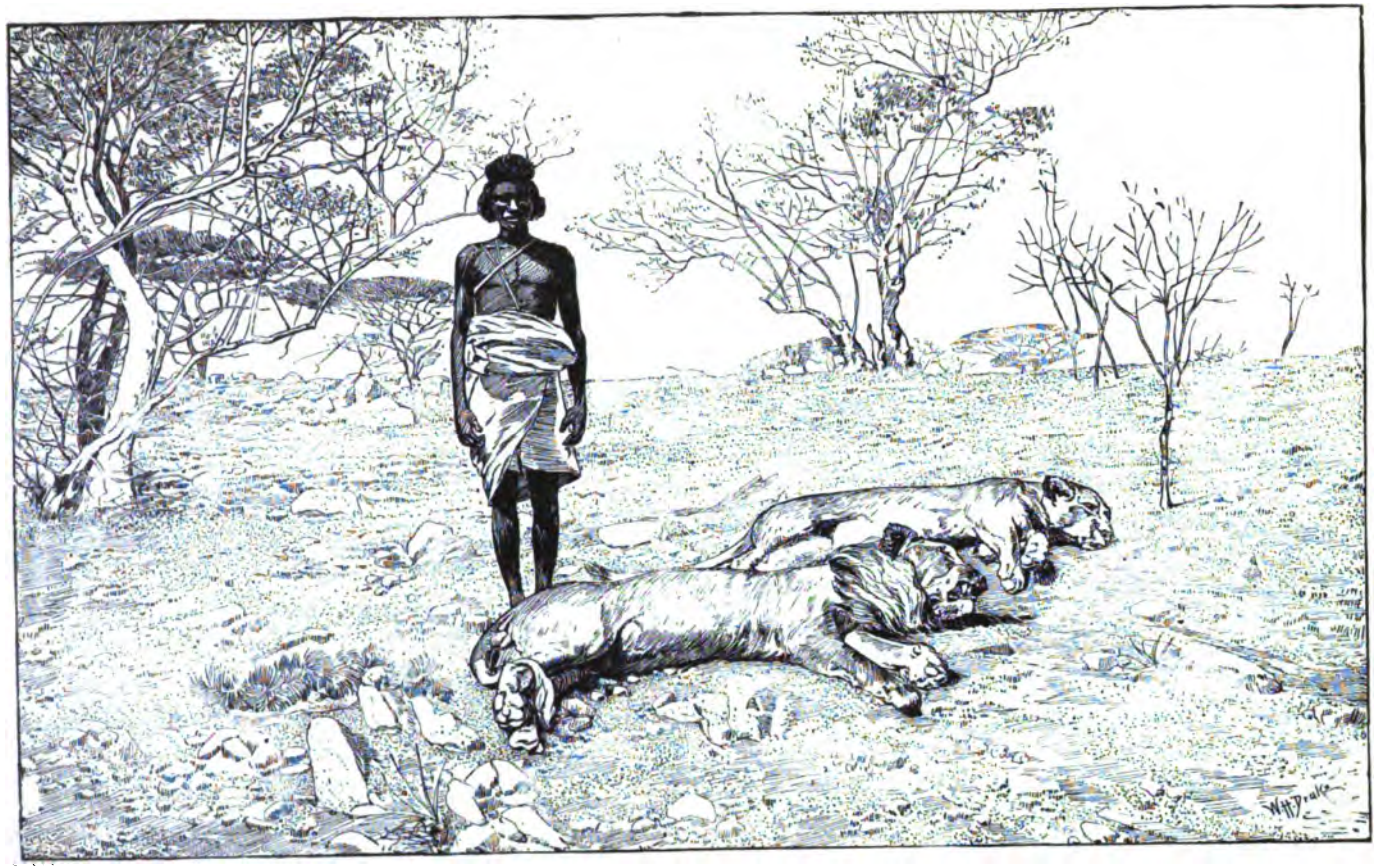
It is difficult for any one, who has not had personal experience of this kind of sport, to realize adequately, how exciting it all is. Even buffalo-shooting at night is sufficiently attractive;

but the excitement is tenfold increased, when the roar of the king of beasts is heard, growing louder as he approaches the hiding-place of the watchers. Then the rifle is grasped with firmer grip, as with beating heart, and finger on trigger, the sportsman watches the trembling sheep tugging and straining at its rope, in vain endeavour to escape from the shadowy form and gleaming eyes, which, though hidden as yet from the eager gaze of the hunter by intervening bushes, are only too plainly visible to the intended victim. An instant of intense suspense, and then with a deep growl the lion launches himself upon his prey. Now is the supreme moment! a quick shot followed by a cloud of dust often rendering a second impossible, and for a moment it is difficult to determine how the game is going. Is he dead, or mortally wounded? in full retreat, or blindly charging his assailant, separated from him by only a few feet?

During the night my brother William saw no less than six lions, at two of which he fired; the others made off without giving him the chance of a shot. Of these six, five paid him a visit at the same time, and this troop stood under a tree too far off for him to fire in the uncertain moonlight; suddenly one of them, with a tremendous rush and a low roar, sprang on the sheep. He fired, and knocked it over; but it recovered itself, and made off for the bushes, where it lay groaning. Very shortly after, another lion made its appearance, and stood gazing at the sheep. Feeling that he had fired too quickly before, he determined to reserve his fire until the lion should be quite close to him. Suddenly, however, with an angry growl, the beast turned sharply round, and galloped off. My brother naturally felt much annoyed, that he had not fired, and feared that he would not get another chance that night. Luckily, however, in a very short time the lion returned to the very

same spot, about forty yards from where he was sitting, and was evidently puzzled to make out who or what he was. Raising his rifle, my brother took a steady shot at the centre of his chest. With a roar of pain the lion made off for some dwarf *dhoum*-palm bushes close by, where both he and the other, which had been wounded, remained all night, and from time to time could be heard groaning. In the morning, as soon as it was daylight, the others, who had heard the shots in the night, came to see what had happened. They could hear one of the lions still groaning in the bushes, and surrounded him, throwing stones to induce him to rush out. They could not move him in this way; so, carefully advancing into the bushes, they found him just expiring. The bullet had entered the chest, and, having traversed the whole length of the body, was found embedded just underneath the skin in one of his flanks. The lion proved to be a very fine one, with a particularly long mane for that part of Africa, where, as a rule, their manes are rather scanty. He measured nine feet two inches in length.

They then went in search of the other lion, and found a pool of blood, where it had been lying all night. They tracked it by its blood for some miles, and caught a glimpse of it several times. It proved to be a lioness, and once they saw it under a tree in the company of two lions. Unfortunately, all three animals got into impenetrable jungle, and were never seen again, although some of us went several times in pursuit. My brother Arthur had seen only two, — a lion and a lioness, — both at the same time. As he fired at the lioness, he only caught a glimpse of her companion. She passed within two yards of where he was sitting, and was not over eight yards off when he fired. In the morning he found her dead and stiff, about twenty yards off, shot through the lungs, and with a broken leg.



LION AND LIONESS.

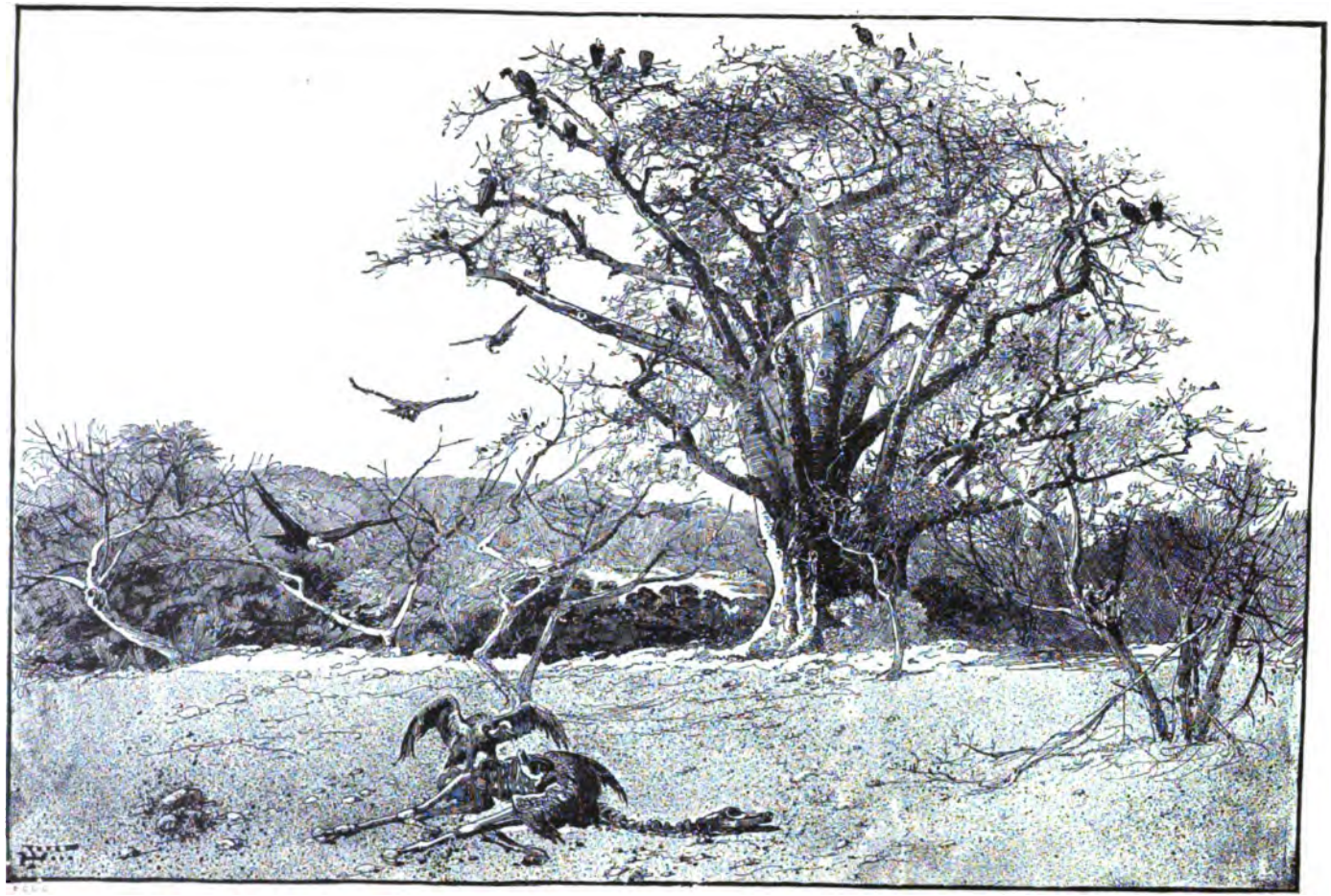
His rifle had played him the same trick as before, and let off both barrels at once, — not very pleasant when shooting lions; and there is a decided possibility, that, if the beast is not killed or disabled by the first shot, he may make for his enemy.

The camels we were waiting for arrived on April 1; but, although we were all anxious not to lose much time in starting in the direction of England, we put off our departure until the 3d, in order to have another chance of sport with the lions. The heat we found considerably greater than it had been: 100° in the shade was quite common, but the nights were fortunately cold.

The night after their success with the lions, my brothers remained in camp, while the rest of us drew for places, and spent the night ensconced behind *zaribas*, each one of us determined, if possible, to add a lion to his collection of trophies. Unfortunately, none of us were successful. One came so close to Aylmer, that it actually rubbed its sides against his *zariba*, and then, scenting danger, took itself off without his even seeing it, although he could, of course, plainly hear it. Aylmer, on the tiptoe of expectation, was awaiting the moment when it should step out close to him into the open, when the native who was sitting with him, holding his second rifle, and shaking with terror, coughed lowly, which alarmed the beast, and he made off at once. Aylmer had no remarks to address to that Arab gentleman afterwards! This man's ordinary duty consisted in looking after Aylmer's horse; but, on this occasion, he had begged to be allowed to sit up, and had declared that he would not be in the least frightened. We did not think it well to let those Arabs who usually acted as gun-bearers, and who had sat up the previous night, do so twice running, in case they should go to sleep when wanted; and on this account his request had been granted.

Colvin had kept awake at his post from eight o'clock until after three, and had neither heard nor seen anything. At last sleep overcame him, and for a few moments he dozed; of course, a lion seized that opportunity to make his appearance. George, who was with him, saw the animal, and quickly woke Colvin, who fired just as an immense lion sprang on the sheep. He must have missed him, as he disappeared into the jungle in a cloud of dust, dragging the sheep with him. He had pulled the stake to which it was tied, rope and all, out of the ground, and made off with his prey. Colvin heard him crunching the poor sheep's bones, as he leisurely devoured it, not many yards from where he lay. In less than ten minutes a lioness made her appearance, but did not approach very near. Colvin fired, and hit her. She made off, however, into the high grass which grew close by; and he heard her there for some time moving about, and occasionally roaring. At daybreak he endeavoured to track her, but was not successful; and nothing more was seen of her.

Lort Phillips did not even hear a lion. I heard one constantly; but it was at the back of my *zariba*, and I saw nothing of it. The next day none of us went far from camp. My brother photographed some vultures that had been feasting on a carcase in the river's bed, and were enjoying a siesta in a huge baobab-tree. At night I lay out in the hope of obtaining a shot at a lion, but was disappointed. I heard one roaring once close to me; and I was greatly excited, as at every instant I imagined he might pounce on my sheep, and was all readiness for a long time, with my rifle on my knees at full cock. The wind was, however, unfortunately wrong, and the beast sneaked off. In the morning I saw his footprints quite close to my *zariba*, but concealed from where I lay by intervening bushes. In addition to the attraction of the sheep, I had



BAOBAB-TREE AND VULTURES.

burned some flesh before taking up my position, hoping by the smell to render my bait still more attractive. I had chosen the spot where my brother William had shot his lion.

Aylmer, in going to his place near the water about eight o'clock, disturbed one which had just drunk, or was going to do so; but it made off before he could get a shot.

On the 3d we resolved to start once more in a homeward direction. Old Sheik Achmed Ageer again saw us an hour or two on our journey, and then left to return to Haikota. I made frequent attempts to find out if the Basé had any religious belief, and every one I asked replied in the negative. The sheik, who was quite the most intelligent of his class I ever met in the Soudan, persisted in declaring they had none whatever; he was of course a Mahometan himself, and both read and wrote Arabic well. He said they knew nothing whatever of a God, and he gave me the following curious account of some of their customs. When he was obliged to make peace with any of their chiefs, the Basé killed a black goat; and both he and the Basé sheik with whom the covenant was to be made, would pluck out an eye, then cut off a hind and then a fore leg, each taking his part in the ceremony. By this they believe, that, if either failed in the engagement they had entered into, the defaulter would lose an eye, leg, or arm.

Another of their customs was, that, if any of their number stole any thing from his neighbour, the offender, accompanied by a numerous contingent from among his people, was brought to a tree growing near his village; the said tree being held, as it were, sacred. In order to prove whether the accused person had really stolen any thing, or not, he was required to pull a piece of bark off the tree without the aid of anything except his own fingers. If he succeeded in doing this, he was acquitted, and held innocent; but if not, he was condemned,

as proved to be guilty, and punished accordingly. As the tree invariably selected for this purpose was furnished with very tough, closely growing bark, it was usually almost impossible to disengage it with the fingers alone; and the prisoner's sentence was generally a foregone conclusion.

Although I think there is very little doubt that the Basé are without religion, and have no God, they must, if the following custom told me by the sheik be true, have some belief in a future state. When a Basé man dies, his wife, or other relations, place something he was fond of during his life — such as the fruit of the baobab-tree, tobacco, etc. — on his tomb. Perhaps the wind, or some human agency, makes away with the offering; they then believe that the dead man has consumed it, and perhaps shared it with other spirits, inhabitants of neighbouring tombs. Should these delicacies disappear faster than the donors anticipated, the attentive relations of the dead man will, perhaps, accuse the relict of the inhabitant of a neighbouring tomb, of being lazy and inattentive in not keeping her husband properly supplied, and so compelling his neighbour to share his dainties with him. I give these stories as they were told me, from notes made at the time.

I told the sheik that it seemed to me that the Basé were the remnants of the original inhabitants of the country, and that they were settled there before the Arabs came over from Arabia. He did not believe this, but adduced no grounds either for or against my theory. He told me there were two brothers who emigrated from Arabia into Africa, one called Basé, the other Nuba. The former settled where his descendants are now found, but he knew nothing as to what part of the country the other brother had gone to. According to him, the only remnants of the original inhabitants of any part of the Soudan that he had heard anything of were reduced to twenty

or thirty families, in the neighbourhood of Cassala. The Hadendowas, he declared, came from Dhalak, and other Red Sea islands; the Beni-Amers (his tribe), Dabainas and Shukreeyehs, from the Hejaz; and the Hallangas, from Yemen.

Although he was intending to return to Haikota when he left us, he said he would soon move some distance farther north, with his flocks and herds, in order to obtain fresh pasturage; during the rainy season, his people mostly went to higher ground than the valley of the Gash. During one rainy season some years ago, he stated that there was such a heavy hailstorm near Haikota, that the hail lay on the ground, nearly a foot deep, for seven or eight days. This statement we could *hardly* swallow, though very probably they have hail there sometimes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

First Day's Journey towards Amedeb. — A False Alarm. — Arrival at Amedeb. — Journey continued. — Khor Baraka. — Another Watch for Lions. — Thrilling Adventure with a Lion. — News of the stolen Rifles and Horse.

OUR first day's journey, after leaving the Gash, was about eighteen miles in the direction of Amedeb, where we encamped in the plain away from water. The country was very much like all that part of the Soudan, very barren and hilly, but in places rather less monotonous travelling than we had usually found it to be when leaving rivers or *khors* such as the Gash. We crossed a number of picturesque rocky *khors*, on the borders of which flourished many large and fine trees in full leaf.

There was a large Basé village on our right, some miles off from where we encamped for the night, and we could distinctly see the lights. The next day we arrived at Amedeb, after a long march of over thirty miles. We were up at daybreak, but could not get the camels off until 7.45; and it was 11.30 P.M. before we got dinner, a long day. The country through which we had travelled was very agreeable, far more so than we had expected to find it. The road, or track rather, was easy going for the camels, except for one steep stony bit over a high hill, and proved to be an infinitely better one for the camels than that which Lort Phillips and I had taken the first time we went to Amedeb.

All day we wound between high hills, and for a long time travelled in the bed of a *khor* called Mogoreb. I never saw a

greener one. The numbers of various brightly plumaged birds, and the general appearance of the country, reminded me of the Anseba valley, which we had visited the previous year, and were again to pass through on our way to the coast. In this *khor* we encountered two very deep wells, situated some miles apart.

On this journey we enjoyed a Basé scare. We had gone on some distance ahead of the caravan, and suddenly came upon two Basé drawing water at a well. They were at first very much frightened at us; but we soon made friends, and, riding on ahead, left them. About an hour later, one of our men came running after us with the alarming news that the Basé had come down in great numbers from the hills, and fallen on the caravan in our rear. We, of course, all turned round, and retraced our steps at our camels' best pace; finding the whole thing, as so often happens in these countries, a false alarm. Before encountering the caravan, however, it seemed as though "the battle" had begun. Colvin and one of the others had got on some distance ahead of me, when suddenly I heard a shot, and did not know what to make of it. I renewed my efforts to get on as quickly as possible, and more than once ran the chance of being knocked off my camel by the boughs of overhanging trees. On regaining the caravan, the mystery of the shot was soon explained. Colvin had put an end to the sufferings of a camel which had been left behind to die.

The "attack" was then explained. The Basé, unseen by us, had been watching our movements from the adjacent hills, and, being unaccustomed to see so large a caravan marching through their country, and probably never having seen Europeans before, were very naturally frightened, and at the same time curious to know what it all meant, and a number of them had come down and followed after the caravan to try and discover what was up.

The two men we had previously met had flourished their spears at them, shouting to them to keep back, at the same time telling them we were friends, and not Turks. On seeing this, Gerghis and some of the other servants had thought it necessary to point guns at them. The Basé shouted out for some of our people to go back, and parley with them, but this they were all afraid to do; and there certainly would have been nothing gained by so doing, as we only wished to travel quickly through the country, and had no thought of stopping there. By the time we had returned to the caravan, all we saw of them was four men watching us from a hill. Soon after we met tranquil people feeding their flocks, and a number of them drew water from a well for our horses and goats.

Before reaching Amedeb we passed a great many large villages belonging to the Barea tribe. On arriving at the town, we were very glad to find newspapers and letters for us. Our letters, however, contained very sad news, telling us of the death, in England, of the Hon. John Maxwell, who had been one of our party in the Soudan the previous winter. Poor fellow, he had had some thoughts of joining us on our present expedition, but had decided not to leave England again so soon; and had died of rheumatic fever.

Our latest news from England was of Feb. 24, and it was only the second time we had had letters since leaving Suez. We found that the Bombashi, who had been in charge when I was there before, had gone to Gedariff; the Bey from Geera, on the Settite, being there in his stead. He was most civil, and gave us tea, — a somewhat unusual refreshment to be offered in those parts. We encamped on the same spot that Lort Phillips and I had selected when there on Feb. 16; spending nearly the whole of the next day at Amedeb, which we found as uninviting a place as I had previously thought it.

We telegraphed to England to say we were all well, and on our way to the coast. This we had, of course, to send in Arabic, first to Cairo, to be forwarded from there to London. We also telegraphed to Père Picard, at Sanheit, to have some flour ready on our arrival there, so as to avoid delay; to Cassala, to order letters (which we expected would be lying there for us), to go to Souakim; and, lastly, to the English consul at Suez, asking him to reply to Sanheit, to say when he expected that the next two steamers would leave Massawa for Suez.

We found the "shop" of the place tenanted by a Greek, who had recently arrived; and we were able to buy German beer, and replenish our almost exhausted stock of sugar.

In the afternoon we made a start in the direction of Sanheit, and got about four miles on our road, camping by some wells, where there were plenty of *sont*-trees, abounding in doves, a number of which we shot. At Amedeb we hired eight fresh camels, as several of ours showed signs of giving out, and we had lost some on the way. We sold two, that were too tired to carry loads, for nineteen dollars; they probably recovered completely, if looked after properly and given a good rest.

The following day we made a long and very uninteresting journey of eleven and a half hours. Although we passed wells in two places, we pushed forward, encamping away from water. The Arabs objected, as usual, to our doing this, as time is no object to them, and they do not care how long they take over a journey. We went straight on past the wells, leaving a couple of camels to come on after us with a plentiful supply.

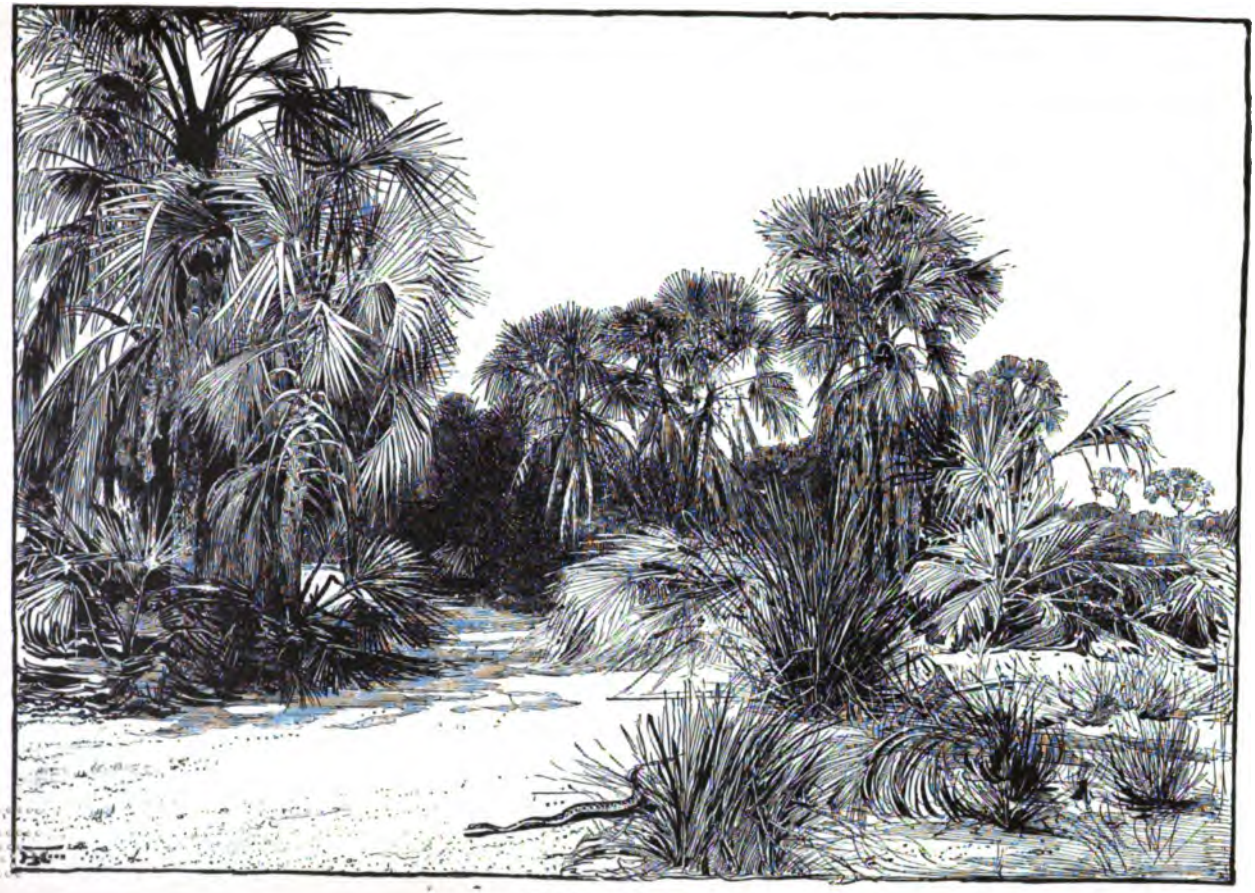
We saw no game all day, travelling in a plain where there was no grass, but plenty of bushes, and crossing occasional *khors*. On both sides of us there was a range of mountains, some of them of considerable height. We passed two villages, composed of mat huts, situated a long distance from any wells,

and met a number of donkeys laden with water-skins, evidently carrying the daily supply.

Two more camels gave out; and we presented them to some Arabs, hoping they might pick up. The work our camels had to do was not too severe, but we could not get them properly looked after. The journeys we took them were shorter, and the loads they had to carry less, than the natives would have placed on their backs; but we found it impossible to keep them in good condition.

The weather we found less hot than it had been latterly on the Gash, and the nights were cool; while in the afternoon heavy clouds would sometimes obscure the sun, rendering travelling much pleasanter. After a four-hours' march, we reached a place called Gargi, situated in Khor Baraka, which we had heard a great deal about, as a likely place for lions. Gargi consisted of a movable village of mat huts, placed in the bed of the *khor*.

Khor Baraka is one of the largest and most important in the Soudan. It runs from the Anseba to Tokar, two days' journey from Souakim. The previous winter we had spent some time on it and some of its tributaries. It is bordered by a thick fringe of *dhoum*-palms, and in many places is very picturesque. We afterwards heard that the two officers of the "Blues," who had travelled with us from Suez to Souakim, had shot a lion at that very place. One of them gave a most graphic account of their adventure, in "Baily's Magazine." They were sleeping out in the open air, which they preferred to a tent, not very long before we encamped in the same spot; and the night was very dark. After having been asleep about two hours, in the sandy bed of the *khor*, they were suddenly aroused from their slumbers by a horrible shriek, and loud cries of "*Asad, asad!*" (lion.) Every one was in commotion



TREES AT GARGI.

in a moment, including the watchmen, who had allowed all the fires, but one, to go out. Their first thought was that a goat or sheep had been carried off by a lion; and they perceived the shadowy form of one, walking away from the camp. One of them fired two rapid shots, the result of which was an angry roar. It soon appeared that it was not a sheep or a goat that had been carried off, but one of the natives, who had been asleep near the fire. The lion had seized the poor fellow by the feet, and dragged him for about four yards, and then left him, disturbed, no doubt, by the man's own shrieks, and the shouts of his companions; and thanks, also, to the plucky and determined manner in which his neighbour had held on to him. The unfortunate man had both his feet severely injured by the lion's teeth, the greater part of the sole of each being torn away, leaving the bones, however, intact. He had little faith in the European method of curing his wounds, and insisted on carrying out his own method of treatment; this consisted in covering his wounds with wood-ashes, and placing the soles of his feet as near as possible to the fire. On examining the course taken by the lion in his peregrinations through their camp, they discovered that he had passed exactly a foot and a half from one of their beds. At daybreak they followed the tracks of the lion, and soon perceived, by marks of blood, that he was wounded. They followed him into a thick clump of *dhoum*-palms, where they heard him groaning. He quickly sprang out at them, receiving another bullet. He again retired into the jungle; and one of them, climbing up a palm-tree, administered the *coup-de-grâce*.

We all, with the exception of my brothers (who gave in to the rest of the party, as they had both shot a lion), decided to lie out at night in the hope of getting a shot at a lion. We chose places a long way from each other, on the banks of the *khor*,

where, hidden under the shadow of the *dhoum*-palms, we could look down on the sandy bed of Khor Baraka, brilliant in the moonlight, and obtain a good view of any lion that might deign to visit our tempting bait, as each of us had a sheep tied up in front of where he sat. Colvin and I saw nothing; though we remained at our posts all night, and heard one or two lions roar occasionally, but they never came near us. Lort Phillips was so much bothered by hyænas, which would keep rushing at his sheep, that, after firing several shots at them, he left, and went to bed. Aylmer thought he saw a lion, but it proved to be a fine panther; which he shot, not, however, before it had sprung on and killed the unfortunate sheep. He also shot a young striped hyæna, which looked different from any specimen we had shot before: it was nearly white, with very long hair.

The next day we continued our journey, and a most amusing incident took place. Gerghis, who was riding in front of the caravan, saw an elephant ahead of him, which he thought was one of a herd. As we were some distance in advance, he turned back, and begged George, who was in the rear, to shoot it. Some of the Arabs got most excited, and danced about, waving their spears in the air. Suddenly some men ran out in great excitement from behind some bushes; and it was then discovered that the elephant over which they had been so excited was a young one that had been caught at Fur-fur, on the borders of the Dembelas country, and which the men had tied to a tree while enjoying a siesta. Every one of course burst out laughing, and Gerghis got greatly chaffed about it. There was a Greek with the elephant, and a number of Beni-Amers Arabs; among others a "hunter," a most useless fellow, whom we had employed the previous winter.

They told us that Sheik Arri (with whom we had made our arrangements, the season before, in the same manner that we

had lately done with Achmed Ageer) had just returned from the Dembelas country, and that he had seen Aylmer's and Lort Phillips's lost rifles; that Ras Aloula had them in his possession, as well as the horse. This was probably a lie: they had heard of our affair at Ma Ambasah, and wanted to say something about it, and so invented this story on the spur of the moment.

We made about seventeen miles before halting for the night at Adardee in Khor Bogou. We passed wells at three different points on the road, immense flocks and herds, and a great many people. We travelled a long way in Khor Bogou, which was very pretty; in places, precipitous rocks rose to a considerable height on both banks. We saw no game with the exception of doves, which were very numerous, a number of which we shot for food. The mountains were getting higher. The only thing wanting in the landscape was more verdure; there were scarcely any trees, though plenty of bushes, while we regretted, for the sake of the camels, the almost total absence of grass. At Adardee we came across several of our old camel-drivers of the previous winter, and engaged one of them with his three camels to go on with us to Massawa.

The camel question was constantly recurring, as one by one they dropped off. It was impossible to lighten the loads they were carrying, and we gave all the attention we could to seeing that they were properly fed; many of them however, unknown to us of course, must have been diseased when we bought them.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Perilous Ascent of Tchad-Amba. — The Church. — The Monks. — We move on again. — An Old Acquaintance. — Arrival at Sanheit. — The Town of Sanheit. — A Last Attempt to recover the Stolen Property. — A Visit to the Church and Schools at Sanheit.

We passed a very curious mountain named Tchad-Amba, which we left on our right. We had accomplished its ascent the year before, and were, I believe, the first white people to have done so, no Turk or Egyptian even having previously gained the summit. It is a very remarkable mountain, standing nearly alone. We spent some time at its foot, and were told by our Arabs that it was impossible to climb it except by one very difficult path known only to the Abyssinian monks dwelling on the top. We were not very ambitious of attempting its ascent, and had formed no plan for doing so; when one day an Abyssinian arrived in camp with a note from Père Picard, our missionary friend of Sanheit. He informed us in his letter, that the bearer of it was one of the monks who dwelt on the top of the mountain, and that for a consideration he was willing to guide us to its summit. Père Picard added that he strongly recommended us to embrace this opportunity of seeing what former travellers had vainly attempted to accomplish.

Munzinger Pacha, a former governor of Sanheit and the surrounding country, as well as a recent Italian traveller, the Marquis Antinori, had offered considerable sums to be permitted to make the ascent; but their offers had been invariably

refused. Before six o'clock the next morning we started, taking with us, as porters, an Abyssinian servant named Butros (Peter), and four soldiers we had brought from Sanheit. We took the soldiers in preference to our Arab servants, as the latter were afraid to accompany us.

Our way led us up a very steep water-course, which, at first easy enough, became more and more arduous the farther we advanced. At length the smooth boulders of rock, frequently piled one on top of the other, became so slippery that we gladly followed the example of our men, who, having divested themselves of their sandals, were climbing with bare feet. At last we came to an enormous slab of rock, to surmount which was like climbing up the roof of a house, at a particularly sharp angle, and with as dangerous a drop in case of a fall. Here one of our water-carriers collapsed, absolutely refusing to proceed farther, as his head would not stand it, and proposed awaiting our return, as he felt sure that we could not get up much farther.

After climbing for another half-hour, we were startled by the fall of a large stone from above, quickly followed by others, which made us hastily seek the shelter of an overhanging ledge; where, from the shouts that greeted us from the top of the mountain, we immediately perceived that the fall of the rocks was not caused by accident, as we had at first imagined, but that they were being hurled at us with hostile intent. After a great deal of shouting on both sides, Butros made our assailants understand that we were Christians, and wished to see their monastery.

At the commencement of hostilities, our guide had endeavoured to sneak off; which so enraged our soldiers that they asked our permission to shoot him on the spot, declaring he had purposely led us into an ambuscade. We quieted them,

however, by telling him that we would surely shoot him if he again attempted to desert us.

After a consultation as to what was to be done, we decided on continuing the ascent. We were unwilling to be beaten; and moreover, owing to the formation of the mountain, we were less exposed in advance than in retreat. A tedious and dangerous climb brought us near the summit, — which was much farther off than we had anticipated, — when we perceived an old man coming down to meet us, who told us, that, seeing the tarbooshes of the soldiers, we had been taken for Turks. He then showed us the best way to reach the top, and pointed out to us how far we were from the path we should have taken.

What was nothing to this old man, who had lived on the mountain for forty years without having come down, was no joke to us; and we were sincerely glad when it was all over, and the top was reached. We found, on our arrival, a huge fig-tree and a number of conical-roofed huts. The monks received us kindly, and gave us a hut to sleep in, some dried figs about the size of hazel-nuts, and unleavened bread, to eat, with very dirty-looking water to wash it down; for which, however, we were very thankful. Their daily fare consisted of figs and bread. We saw several large threshing-floors, and they grew sufficient *dhurra* for their own use.

There were eight monks, mostly aged creatures, some of whom had not been down into the valley below for over forty years. They were dressed in coarse cotton cloth, dyed yellow, with caps of the same material, and went barefooted. They took us to see their church, — a round building, thatched with straw, and divided into three compartments, one inside the other; the innermost being accessible only to the high-priest.

They showed us some manuscripts; one of which, evidently held in high veneration among them, we understood to be a

Bible. It was placed in three covers made of skin, and had handsome silver clasps. I tried to buy some of their manuscripts, but they would not sell anything. Outside the church were three large flat stones, made to serve the purpose of bells. They were suspended by leather thongs from the bough of a tree, and, when struck by a stone, gave out a pleasant, bell-like sound.

Twelve or fourteen was the full complement of monks who lived on the top of Tchad Amba, but eight of their number had gone on some mission to King John. We were informed, that, during the Abyssinian war, a number of valuables were placed in the care of these monks for safe-keeping. Though they were very hospitable, I am sure they were not at all glad to see us; they told us we were the first visitors they had ever had. The night was very cold, and we were obliged to light a fire inside the hut. The next morning my brother took his rifle, and shot a small species of goat which the natives called a *sachar* (*calotragus saltatrix*). Its hair was very coarse, resembling that of a reindeer. We had never met with a specimen before: it is evidently an inhabitant of the higher mountains.

It turned out, that the man whose guidance might have cost us our lives was a *mauvais sujet* who had been expelled from the monastery some years before; and, although he brazened it out, his late brethren were evidently not enraptured at seeing him again, more especially as, in offering to show us the way to the top, he had betrayed a sacred trust, having sworn never to divulge it.

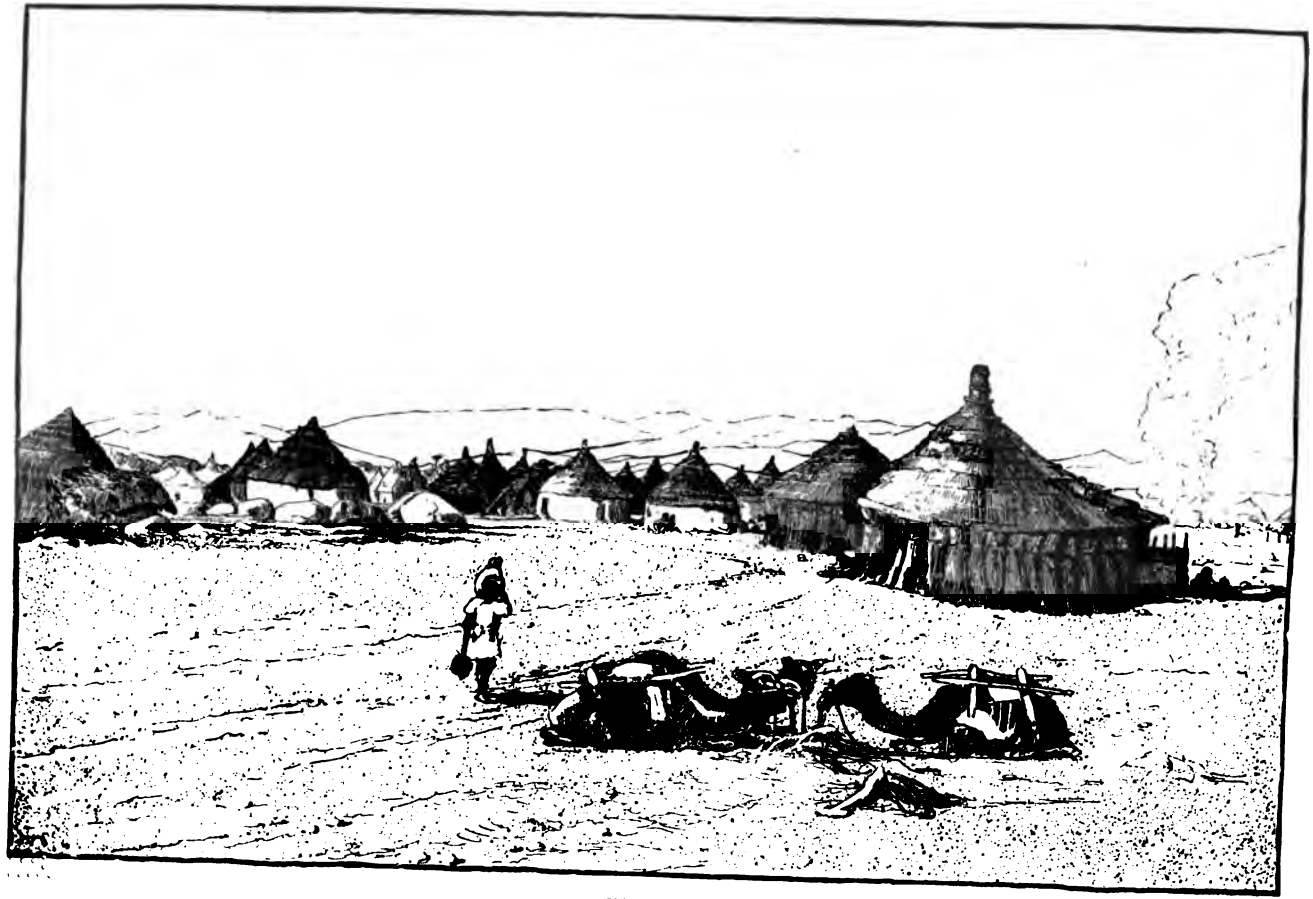
The mountain is accessible only from two points. The one usually taken leads over a ridge so narrow, that for more than a hundred yards the safest mode of progression is to sit straddle-legged, and work one's self along, one foot hanging literally over one valley, and the other over another. It is on one of

the highest points of the mountain. This road leads in the direction of Sanheit; and those monks whose heads could not stand crossing the ridge were taken round by the way we had ascended, which was a good deal farther from Abyssinian territory.

Before we started on our return, the monks took us to a ledge of rock, from which we obtained a fine view of the surrounding country for many miles, our tents immediately beneath us appearing mere white specks. The monks told us they had frequently seen our tents, and heard our shots, and wondered what we were doing. They started us off on our return, by much the same way that we had come; but instead, this time, of following the ledge, as we had been obliged to do in coming up, to protect ourselves against the stones thrown by them, we went a shorter and easier way, and soon reached the place where we had received their first volley of rocks. In making the ascent, we had been for a great part of the way in the shade; in going down, however, towards noon we were in the blazing sun, and hemmed in by great boulders, reflecting the terrific heat. We were obliged to take off our shoes and stockings, as in our ascent, and found clambering over the burning rocks a most painful proceeding.

To return to my narrative: Leaving Adardee, our next halt was at Ashidireh, about seventeen miles distant. Although in this country villages are by no means numerous, the Arabs have names for every well, *khor*, or hill. It is often, however, difficult to know their proper names, as it frequently happens that the different tribes have different names for one and the same thing. Ashidireh was merely a watering-place, and Adardee the name given to some wells in Khor Bogou.

On the road we met Ala-ed-Deen Pacha, an old acquaintance, who was at Massawa last year. The government of the



KEREN.

Soudan had been lately divided into two, and the eastern part made separate from Khartoum, Berber, the White and Blue Niles, Kordofan, and Darfour. Ala-ed-Deen, as I have already mentioned, had just been made governor of Souakim, Massawa, Sanheit, Cassala, Gedariff, Gallabat, and the intervening country. He was very cordial, and declared he had heard of our affair with the Dembelas, and said he believed the rifles had come into the possession of Ras Aloula. He was on his way to Amedeb, and intended visiting the various towns under his jurisdiction, making Cassala his headquarters, our old friend the Bey there having been dismissed.

Ala-ed-Deen had with him a man who spoke a little English, and who had previously had control of the telegraph at Khartoum, but had been dismissed from there. Now he was to be reinstated, and, moreover, to have the charge of all the telegraph-system in Ala-ed-Deen's province.

The next day took us into Sanheit, which we reached on April 10. A new road, only lately finished, had been built over the mountain, decidedly the best piece of road-making I had ever seen in the country, and nearly good enough for carriages, had there been such vehicles. It was a broad, zigzag road, cut in places through the rock, the work of the soldiers at Sanheit, and due entirely to the energy of the present governor.

In the summer of 1881 the Abyssinians had come down into the country between Ashidireh and this mountain pass, and driven off a great many cattle, as well as killing a number of the Sanheit people, among others Gerghis' father and Ali Bakeet's brother. An old servant of ours of the previous winter, whom we greatly disliked and eventually dismissed, rejoicing in the name of Totel, nicknamed by us "total failure," had turned renegade, and assisted them against his own people; a scandalous proceeding, which I believe to be of rare

occurrence among these Arabs. As usual on such occasions, the Egyptian soldiers at Sanheit remained in garrison, and did nothing to help them. The garrison consisted of fifteen hundred men, all negroes from the White Nile.

Several wells had been sunk close to the road. The air was fresh and invigorating; and on reaching the top of the pass, and winding in and out of the hills for a short distance, we were delighted to look down on Sanheit in the valley below us, surrounded by mountains, and situated over five thousand feet above sea-level. It is the healthiest and coolest town in the Egyptian Soudan, and we knew it well. We had ridden on ahead of the caravan, and went straight to the mission-house, where we saw Père Picard. He said the letter I had written to him from Amedeb on Feb. 17 had been a month and a half on the road, as it had gone by Cassala, Souakim, and Massawa. He had replied at once; but I had not received it, as it had probably gone by the same roundabout route.

He informed us that he had conversed with two Abyssinians who had seen our stolen rifles, which they declared had been sent to the king, who was now in Shoa. He seemed confident, that by writing to the king, through the French consul at Massawa, we should get them back; so we determined at all events to try and do so. His informants told him that the Dembelas who took the rifles consisted, as we had imagined, of a party of men out after game, which they hoped to spear by watching near their watering-places, and among them were two men Père Picard mentioned to us by name, one of whom had spent about two years in the Egyptian Soudan, and spoke Arabic fluently. He thought this man was probably the one who wore the felt hat.

With regard to the children of poor Mahomet, our guide, whom the Dembelas had killed, Père Picard told us that the

family were so fanatical, and afraid of the Egyptians, that they would not permit them to go to Sanheit; and consequently he could do nothing towards educating them, all that was possible being to send them money.

Sanheit is situated in a very barren, treeless-looking country, in what is known as the Bogos country, and used to be independent until Munzingar Pacha some years ago took it for the Egyptians, and built a fort there. Previous to that, there had been many trees, all of which he cut down. Each family, too, had its own burying-ground enclosed in high stone-walls; these he removed, and used in building the present fort, and there remains scarcely a trace of these ancient sepulchres. Sanheit is usually marked on the maps as Keren, and was known by that name before the arrival of the Egyptians. It is now applied only to the part of the town built before that period, and separated from the more modern town and fort of Sanheit, which is opposite to it, by several hundred feet of arid-looking land. This arid-looking plateau, however, after the rains, which commence in June, grows a considerable quantity of tobacco; and there are several Greeks who have been established there for many years, engaged in its cultivation.

We pitched our tents close to the well belonging to the mission, which was fully two hundred feet deep, and under the shadow of an immense fig-tree. By the aid of irrigation, almost any thing would grow in the favourable climate of Sanheit; the soil is rich, but water scarce. The missionaries possess several gardens, in which with great success they grow potatoes, cabbages, lettuces, carrots, and other European vegetables, as well as vines and pomegranates. It is a pity they have never tried mangoes, which I am sure would flourish there, and, besides supplying fruit, would be most valuable for shade.

We went to call on the governor, and found his divan much

improved in the last year; instead of a small, dirty-looking kind of barn, we were shown into a nice room, furnished with plenty of comfortable chairs, and there were actually clean white-muslin curtains to the windows! The governor, a military man, and evidently very energetic, was new to the place. He had greatly improved and strengthened the fort, and was commencing to build a mosque, for which they were making red-burnt bricks instead of the usual sun-dried ones.

We found a telegram from the English consul at Suez, to say that the next two steamers would leave Massawa on the 6th and 30th inst. To make more sure, we telegraphed to Massawa, and received an answer to say that the next boat sailed on the 26th. Père Picard and another brother dined with us; and afterwards a great crowd assembled to see the magic-lantern, with which all seemed to be greatly delighted. Although we were told that the hottest months in Sanheit were those of March, April, and May, we found the weather much cooler than any we had experienced for some time. The nights were quite cold, and all day a strong, cool wind blew.

Colvin had brought a letter of recommendation to "all bishops and priests," from Cardinal Manning; which seemed greatly to please the reverend fathers, who held him in high estimation.

We asked to see over the church and schools, — the largest and best-conducted thing of the kind in the Egyptian Soudan, — and were greatly pleased with what we saw; so much so, that, although none of us were Roman Catholics, we all gladly subscribed to so laudable an establishment. It had been a good deal enlarged lately, and was altogether far more important than we had expected. There are seven brothers, all Lazarists; nine sisters; and also a bishop, a Swiss, who lives usually at Sanheit, but when we were there he was absent in

Europe. They clothe, feed, and educate seventy girls and eighty boys, all of whom live in the establishment. We were conducted over the dormitories, which were very airy and scrupulously clean; each child had an *angareb*, with the bed-clothes belonging to it neatly folded up and placed at the foot. We were shown one large room, in which was a printing-press, where religious books were being printed in the Amharic language (one of the languages of Abyssinia) by one of the fathers. We were next taken to the carpenter's shop, where cart-wheels were being made. Every thing is done by the fathers themselves. There are two carts, drawn by bullocks belonging to the mission, — the only wheeled conveyances I ever saw in the Soudan.

Besides the children who live at the mission, and who are mostly from Abyssinia, they have five hundred belonging to Sanheit, who attend the schools daily. It not unfrequently happens, that a mother will sell her child; whenever the priests hear of such a case, they go to the government authorities, who make the mother give up the money to the purchaser, and hand the child over to the mission. One such child had arrived, the very morning of our visit, a little boy between two and three years old; his mother had sold him for three dollars! The priests had christened him Lorenzo.

We went inside the church, — really a very nice building, with a vaulted roof. A native priest, an Abyssinian I believe, was engaged in baptising some fresh converts. We were told, that, during an earthquake some two or three years ago, a great part of the roof had fallen in, and that every thing in the church had been overturned except the image of the Virgin and Child over the high altar.

We went to see the sisters in a large airy room, opening out of a courtyard in which European flowers, such as geraniums,

verbenas, and roses, were blowing, and looking quite home-like. One of the sisters, a Swiss, possessed some medical knowledge, and, with pardonable pride, showed us her dispensary, well furnished with neat rows of bottles and drawers. Everything about the mission was comfortable and European-looking, in great contrast to its surroundings, — rooms with red-tiled floors, furnished with chairs and tables, linen-presses, a sewing-machine, etc. We saw two harmoniums; one in the church, another in a room in which one of the sisters was holding a singing-class.

Prettier children it would be hard to find; and all looked clean, happy, and well cared for. We heard them sing a hymn in praise of the Virgin, in French, which they did very well; then they indulged us in a quaint Abyssinian dance. Sewing is a great part of the education of both boys and girls, and we saw a class in one room learning to sew.

There are three of these mission-establishments in Abyssinia belonging to the same society, but they have no sisters attached to them. At Massawa they have, however; and I believe the establishment there is as large as, or larger than, that at Sanheit. They have nothing to do with the missions at Khartoum or Berber, which are, I believe, not nearly so flourishing or well-managed.

The most disheartening part of the mission was, as the fathers and sisters confessed to us, the difficulty in finding situations for their *protegés* after they had reared and educated them. Outcast from their own people, and unable to find employment amongst the Mussulman authorities, they are thrown on their own resources; which proves more fatal to the women than to the men.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

We start for Massawa. — Dra's sad Story. — The Anseba Valley. — An Attempt to make India-rubber from the *Quol-quol* Plant. — El Ayn. — Bashi-Bazouks and their Prisoners. — We encamp at the Water-course Camphor. — Occasional Sudden Rising of the Water in the *Khors*.

AT noon on the 11th a start was made for Massawa. We had done a good deal of telegraphing to both Suez and Massawa, endeavouring to obtain some idea as to the date of the probable departure of the next steamer from the latter port; but our replies were so vague and contradictory, that we resolved to lose no time in starting for the coast, there to wait for the first opportunity that should offer itself.

Some of the servants belonging to Sanheit, we left behind. Gerghis, who came from the same place, and had been with us both winters, Lort Phillips decided to take with him to England. He was a smart, active boy of about seventeen, who had been brought up at the mission, where he had learned a little French. We met some of the soldiers who had been with us the previous winter; one of whom had proved a useful addition to our *entourage*, being handy and clever in skinning, and in many other ways. He told us that the Effendi, the head of our "army" then, had since died. It appeared, that to his military profession he added that of fakir, and was in the habit of collecting live snakes and scorpions with which to perform charms. He had caught a snake, and placed it in a bag; and, while assisting at the obsequies of some one near Sanheit, where

his magical powers were called into requisition, he produced the reptile, which bit him, causing his death.

One of the best of our Sanheit servants, who had been with us during both past winters, by name Dra, a most intelligent, faithful fellow of about thirty, who could both speak and write a little French, also left us before our departure for the coast. The priests told us a most horrible story about him, which we had never heard of before, and which illustrates the state of degradation in which the people live. It appears, that, a long time back, his father had stolen a cow; the theft was traced to him, and he was ordered to pay it back at once, but having disposed of it, and being without money, he could not do so, and consequently, according to the law among his tribe, he was condemned to return two cows; and this went on at a sort of compound-interest rate (he being still unable to pay the man back), until he owed one hundred cows. By the law of his tribe, he then became the slave of the man from whom he had stolen; this slavery consisting, as far as he was concerned, in his being obliged to follow his master, should he go to fight against any neighbouring tribe, and in attending the ceremonies consequent on his marriage or death. The dreadful part of it, however, was, that his wife, and any daughters he might have, were forced to lead immoral lives; and this extended to all his female descendants; in consequence of which state of affairs, no respectable woman would marry Dra. Dra's sister had married a European, and he had hoped that by so doing she would be free; but, her husband dying of small-pox, she was forced to become a public woman.

Dra's master was in prison when we were in Sanheit; and the priests told us that nothing could be done towards freeing Dra, until he was liberated, which would be in a few weeks' time. When that event took place, they said his freedom could

be purchased for thirty dollars, besides two dollars which must be given to a man who would go round with some noisy instrument to the various villages about, somewhat in the manner of a town-crier, and proclaim his freedom ; in addition to which, a dollar each would have to be given to three witnesses. Dra did not know that all this had been told to us ; and when we called him into the tent, and interrogated him on the subject, he became greatly excited, and evidently did not at all like our knowing about it ; he, however, confessed that it was all true. We left the requisite sum with the priests to procure his freedom ; with which he was greatly pleased, though they said it would take some time to accomplish. They told us, that, if we spoke to the government about it, they would deny the existence of such a thing ; as, although they would disapprove of it, they would be powerless to prevent it, because it was a purely tribal law, which with such people was of far more weight than any that the Egyptian authorities might endeavour to pass.

The first day out of Sanheit, we accomplished only about eleven miles. We descended a considerable distance, Sanheit being about five thousand feet above the sea, and pitched our tents in the Anseba valley. For some distance we passed flourishing-looking gardens, where vegetables of various kinds were growing ; some of the natives having followed the example of the mission.

Although no water flows in the Anseba in the dry season, in many places it comes to the surface, and can always be obtained by sinking wells to no great depth ; so that irrigation becomes comparatively easy, and this was being taken advantage of in many places. Some three or four miles after leaving the town we passed a fort called Sobab, garrisoned with soldiers, and situated on the top of a hill commanding the approach to Sanheit. The valley of the Anseba is a most favourable ground

for naturalists, many interesting and brightly plumaged birds being found there. Partridges were extremely plentiful, and of two kinds, — the *Francolinus Rüppelli* and *F. gutturalis*. We shot a good many of them, and they afforded excellent sport. We also shot some beautiful trogons and large yellow pigeons, besides doves of different kinds, — the *columba Guinea*, *Turtur Senegalensis*, and *Treron Abyssinica*.

The trees were very numerous, large, and of many different kinds; in fact, a pleasanter camping-ground it would be difficult to find, our only regret being that we had not more time to spend there. One tree that was very common there had long hanging tendrils, from which hung a pod-like fruit about two feet in length.

The journey from Sanheit to El Ayn is certainly, as far as scenery and climate are concerned, the most agreeable I ever made in the Soudan. Our next day's journey was as far as Calamet, twenty-three miles. After following the course of the Anseba for five or six miles, we left it, and soon began to ascend a very steep hill, most trying for the camels, which were rapidly decreasing in number; many of them had died, some had been sold for an old song, and five given to the priests.

On reaching the summit of the mountain, we obtained a most extensive view. The path down the other side was longer, and quite as steep as the one by which we had come up. The flora differed from any thing we had yet seen: there were aloes, the castor-oil plant, cacti of many kinds, including the *quol-quol*, and bright-coloured flowers in great profusion. The *quol-quol* (*euphorbia Abyssinica*) contains a poisonous, white, milky juice, which is very sticky, and flows out plentifully on a sprig being wounded or broken. I believe that the Abyssinians use this juice for catching fish in the small streams, by throwing a quantity of it into the water; the fish become insensible, and float

LUNCHEON ON ROAD TO EL AYN.

on the surface, when they are easily captured. A drop of this juice, inadvertently getting into one's eye, is said to be sufficient to cause blindness; and I have heard that the milk of the *asclepia gigantea*, an extremely common desert-plant throughout the Soudan, is possessed of the same charming quality.

Some Frenchmen had lately taken it into their heads, that the juice of the *quol-quol* would form a cheap substitute for India-rubber, and expected to make a large fortune by exporting it. Their expectations had been most unduly and cruelly raised, by the report they had received of the first consignment sent to Europe. By some mistake, their consignees had opened a case of India-rubber from Zanzibar, in mistake for the *quol-quol*, and immediately wrote to them to send all they could possibly obtain at the price they had named, which was far lower than what Zanzibar India-rubber cost. On receiving this report, they sent off a great quantity as quickly as they could, and had sent a great deal before a second letter reached them, demanding what they meant by sending such rubbish. Then the whole mistake was cleared up, but not before the poor Frenchmen had lost largely by the transaction. In shape, this tree resembles a cone reversed. It grows to a height of twenty-five to thirty feet, and bears yellow and red coloured fruit, which grow together in clusters, in much the same way as dates.

We did not see much game; but Lort Phillips shot a very fine buck *nellut*, after a stalk to the top of a hill. This species of antelope is always found in very hilly districts, but does not frequent wide, open plains, like gazelle, ariel, and many other varieties of antelope. Lions are sometimes seen in this country, and used to be very common. We were also told that a panther had been lately seen near Calamet.

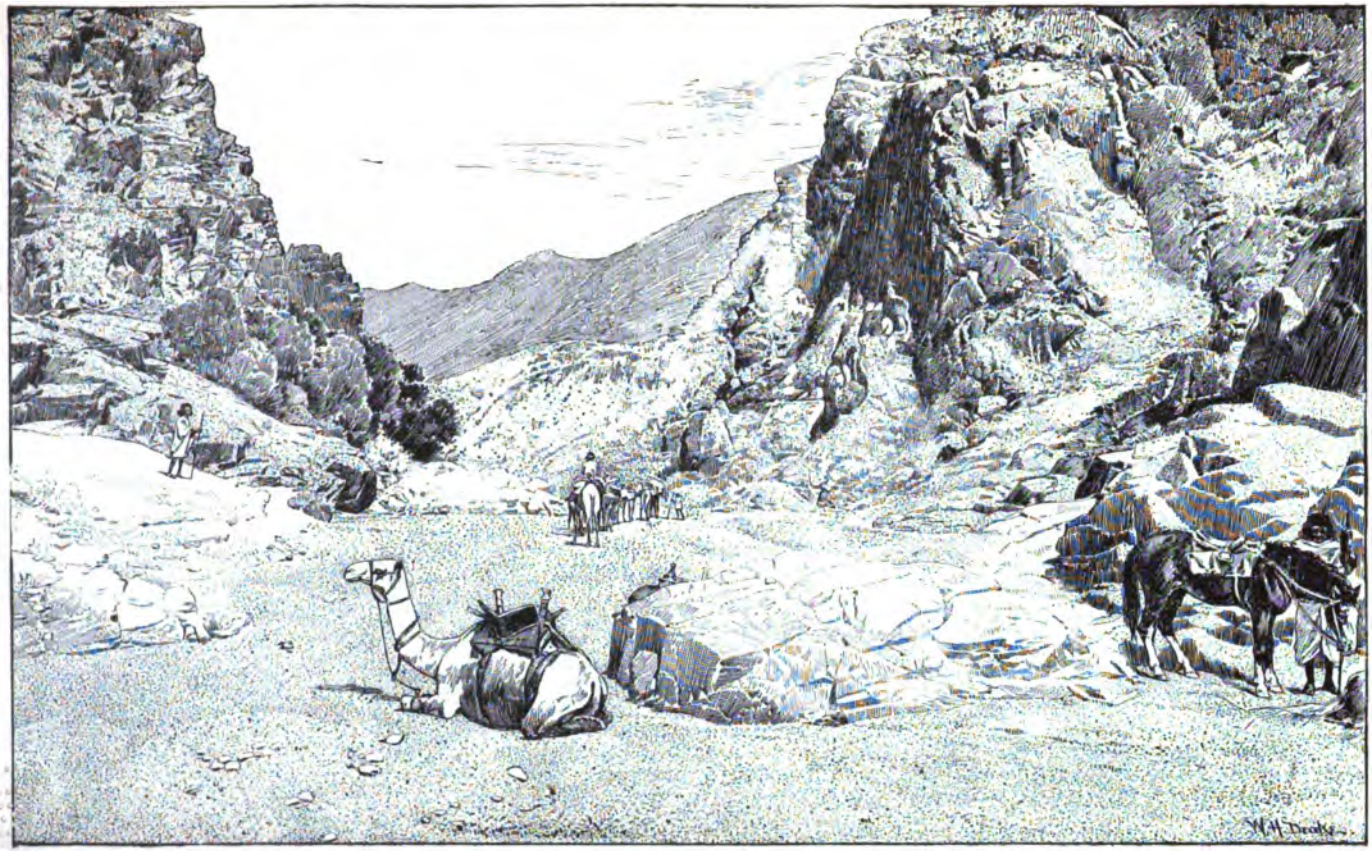
Another long day's march took us to El Ayn. We were descending all the time; and often travelled in the wide, sandy

bed of *khors*. Our road lay through a very beautiful, rocky pass, where it was difficult to believe we were in Africa; and led through a narrow gorge, barely wide enough for two camels to pass, with towering rocks on either side, the resort of the dog-faced baboon.

We passed several large burial-grounds, — large, at least, to be found in such wilds, — and two sheiks' tombs, which in the distance, placed as they were on prominent rocks above the path, presented quite the appearance of castles or fortresses. These Arab cemeteries are usually surrounded by a circular wall of stones, the top covered with small white pebbles, for the purpose of scaring away the wild beasts; and even the tombs are generally covered with these pebbles, which give them a decidedly neat appearance.

We lunched under an overhanging rock in the pass, where perfect shade could be enjoyed at any time of the day. It was at the junction of a narrow gorge with the main one; and here the rains had washed down quantities of *débris*, such as leaves, grass, and twigs, which, in course of time, had become fossilized in a very curious manner; the rock under which we sat being formed of these materials.

We shot no game on this day's journey; but saw several *sachars*, the kind of mountain-goat my brother had shot on Tchad Amba. We added to our collection of birds, if not to our larder, however, by obtaining a fine secretary-bird. Two or three times during our travels, we came across this singular bird, but had not been able to obtain a specimen. The Arabs call it the "Devil's horseman," from the extraordinary swiftness with which it runs. This bird lives almost entirely on reptiles, which it kills. Towards evening, heavy clouds gathered, and, the atmosphere appearing to be laden with moisture, we expected rain; but it fortunately kept off.



ON THE ROAD TO EL AYN.

The district known as El Ayn, which means "the spring," is a very curious one. The Arabs give that name both to the country and the stream, which, rising to the surface in the bed of a *khor*, flows for three or four miles, and then loses itself in the sand. The water is very clear, though slightly brackish. The country about, though picturesque, is unfortunately very feverish, and possesses a rainy season during what is the driest season in the adjacent country.

After passing through a very arid tract, it is curious to come suddenly on the verdancy of spring. Here we found the hill-sides clothed in green, and every thing looking fresh and flourishing. Birds were building their nests; and the great numbers of weaver-birds, whose pendent structures hung from the boughs, particularly interested us. The air was filled with the buzz of insects; among them, unhappily, mosquitoes. We found also several chameleons.

Wart-hogs (*phacochœrus œliani*) are not uncommon in this valley, my brother being lucky enough to obtain a right and left; one of those he shot had fine tusks.

After a night at El Ayn we resumed our journey, fortunately escaping the rain which fell almost every day; on two former journeys we had not fared so well, getting a good wetting each time, on one occasion having three days of it. It seldom continued all day however, usually commencing at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, when it would come down in torrents, and perhaps continue for half the night. Soon after starting, we killed a small snake, which the Arabs declared to be very venomous: we had met with very few of any kind, throughout our travels.

We overtook a detachment of Bashi-Bazouks in charge of a number of wretched-looking prisoners, — Arabs who had been caught paying tribute to the Abyssinians. They marched in

slave fashion, in single file, each with his neck in a heavy yoke made of the forked bough of a tree, and fastened together with ropes, rendering escape impossible.

We made a long march, and after ascending for a short distance from El Ayn came to an immense plain, stretching away on our right to the foot of the Abyssinian mountains, while to our left we could just perceive the sea. No halt was made until after dark, when we encamped about three miles before reaching Camphor, a considerable water-course, with a deep pool, where we indulged in the rare luxury of a swim. My brother shot a *beisa* antelope (*oryx beisa*), the first of its species we had met with; it is decidedly rare in these parts, as we never heard of its existence in any other part of the Soudan through which we travelled; it is common, I believe, in South Africa. Its horns are long and straight.

From Camphor a messenger was sent on to Massawa with a note to the authorities there, telling them we were on our way, and begging them to detain the steamer until our arrival, if by chance one were just leaving port. We crossed many *khors* between Camphor and the coast, in some of which we found a small quantity of water in pools. During the rains, a great deal of water finds its way to the sea, from the Abyssinian mountains, by these channels; and the rise is sometimes so sudden, that without any warning a dry bed may be suddenly transformed into a raging torrent, perhaps ten or twelve feet deep.

The previous winter two English travellers whom we met, came very near losing their luggage in this way. They had spent the night encamped half way down the bank of one of these *khors;* and the following morning, while at breakfast, they perceived the torrent coming, and had only just time to save their effects; in fact, they did not succeed in escaping alto-

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gether, for some of their belongings got wet, and a number of their cooking-utensils were lost. After two or three hours the water subsided almost as quickly as it had arisen, leaving deep pools here and there.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Arrival at Massawa. — Comfortable Quarters at the "Palace." — Situation of Massawa. — Water-supply of Massawa. — The Town is guarded at Night. — Camel-sale by Auction. — The Start from Massawa. — Perilous Position of Mahoom.

ANOTHER very long march brought us to Massawa; and so, on April 15, terminated our wanderings by land. It was after dark when we arrived, having made a caravan-journey of over thirteen hours. We had intended making two easy days of it; but the messenger we had sent forward, the previous day, met us early in the afternoon to tell us that an Italian boat of the Rubbatino Company would leave the next morning, and that, if we wished to catch it, we must hurry on. This was luck; and, of course, we did not hesitate to take advantage of it. On the way Aylmer's servant shot a fine buck ariel, and my brother wounded a gazelle in the shoulder, but not badly. His fox-terrier Tartar, after a long and exciting chase, caught it, and so at the last moment retrieved his character, as we had come to look upon him as a useless kind of dog; he stood the heat and journey well, and soon learned to bark if tired, when he would be placed on the back of one of the baggage-camels. We saw a large troop of baboons, which are not often observed so near the coast.

On arriving at Massawa, the first thing we did was to call on the governor, who was very civil, and gave us rooms in what Suleiman called the "palace." We were amused to learn from

the latter, that he had tacked on to a telegram we told him to send to the governor of Massawa, from Sanheit, "Have palace ready for us;" and his instructions had happily been carried out to the letter. It was the most comfortable place imaginable for such a climate, and proved to be far more so than our quarters at Souakim had been; and, being built on a small island, was, comparatively speaking, cool. It consisted of a very large square house; the living-rooms were all on the first floor, the ground-floor being given up to offices, store-rooms, the kitchen, etc. To reach our apartments, we had to ascend a broad double flight of steps, at the top of which a massively carved wooden door gave access to a lofty domed hall, out of which opened four large rooms; the only furnished one was kept as a sort of divan, and the other three were given up to our use. A broad verandah, upon which three doors opened, ran all round the house, except over the front steps. We placed our dining-table in the centre of the hall; and there, in hot weather, by opening all the doors, "the four winds of heaven" could be enjoyed. Massawa, like Souakim, is built on an island, which is completely covered with houses, and is joined to another island by a causeway about two hundred yards long, on which are the barracks, the governor's residence, and a number of small houses; to this, again, is joined another, on which the palace stands, but no other building. To reach the mainland, it is necessary to pass the barracks, and follow a very long causeway for fully three-quarters of a mile.

There is no water in Massawa, and pipes are laid on from the mainland as far as the barracks; and from there into the town may be seen a constant stream of donkeys going to and fro with the necessary supply. It is slightly brackish, but excellent water for drinking purposes is brought into the town from a distance of four or five miles.

Massawa has the reputation of being about the hottest place on earth. I have been there several times, and, on each occasion, was singularly fortunate in not experiencing anything phenomenal. There was generally a strong sea-breeze and a good deal of cloudy weather; still, I have no doubt that at times, and for long together, the heat becomes all but unbearable.

At sunset the gate leading into the town is closed, and guarded by soldiers; and no one is admitted without a permit. The causeway to the mainland is also guarded at the other end. These precautions, we were told, are taken for fear of the Abyssinians, who, having no port of their own, are naturally very anxious to possess Massawa. It is a great pity that it does not belong to them, as it ought to do; for, if they had a port, it would be a great help towards opening up and developing the resources of their country. The anchorage is fairly good, and the country about very mountainous and picturesque. A few Europeans live there, engaged in trade; and a number of Banians from India, who make their living out of the pearl-fisheries off the coast and the adjacent islands, Dhalak especially being famed for them.

We have had no consul at Massawa since the time of the Abyssinian war; and it is much to be regretted that we have had no representatives in the Soudan, as they could have done more towards suppressing the slave-trade than any one else. I believe consuls are to be established, and it is to be hoped there will be no more delay in appointing them; there should be one at Khartoum, Souakim, and Massawa.[1]

As M. Raffray, the French consul, was absent in Europe, we called on the Frenchman who was acting for him, and con-

[1] Since writing the above, I hear that consuls have been appointed both to Souakim and Khartoum.

sulted with him as to the probability of recovering our rifles. He had travelled a good deal in Abyssinia, and seemed to be conversant both with the people and the country. His opinion was, that if the rifles had come into the possession of the king we should get them back, but he did not feel at all sure that they had ever reached his hands. He advised our asking our consul-general in Egypt, Sir Edward Malet, to speak to the French consul-general in Cairo, and get him to telegraph to him at Massawa to do his best for us, and when he heard from him he would send a messenger to the king with a letter. He declared that the king was at present very well disposed towards Europeans. I hope before very long to be able to visit his country, and judge for myself.

The number and variety of fish at Massawa is something extraordinary, and many are of great beauty. Numbers of large fish are to be seen jumping in the harbour, and in the shallow water near the causeway; among them the beautiful zebra-fish, a small species, striped yellow and black, others brightest blue, and some with black bands across the back; while that curious creature the beckoning-crab is quite common in the wet sand, near the edge of the water, and in marshy places; it is bright yellow and blue, with one long claw with which it always appears to be beckoning; hence its name. We found them very difficult to catch, as they all had holes in the sand, down which they promptly retreated on our approach.

We all bathed in the sea before breakfast,—a proceeding which seemed greatly to astonish the natives. We, of course, avoided the deep water for fear of sharks, but, all the same, were informed by residents that we had done a most dangerous thing from a sanitary point of view; and one man explained that the extreme saltness of the water made bathing hurtful! A real danger, however, most certainly existed in the presence of

vast numbers of a kind of sea-urchin, which lived at the bottom of the water, and were of a most formidable variety. They were very large, and furnished with very long, sharp spikes, which broke off on being touched, leaving their points embedded in the flesh. I think they were poisonous; for Lort Phillips got some in his hand, and suffered agonies in consequence, the painful effects of which did not wear off for some time.

We sold by auction our *hygeens* and the camel which Shereef the waiter always rode with the luncheon when on the march: and they of course fetched very low prices, as buyers knew we were leaving, and must dispose of them. Lort Phillips's fetched the highest price, — forty-five and a half dollars, having cost eighty. It was a female, and a wonderfully easy goer; in fact, I never saw a better. My beautiful animal only brought twenty-four; he cost me forty at Cassala, and was in as good condition when I sold him as when bought. We were, of course, able to look after our own riding-camels to a considerable extent ourselves, and, moreover, told off those men we considered the most careful to take charge of them. I was very loath to part with mine; and, had I been intending to return to the country the following winter, I should have endeavoured to make some arrangement to have him kept for me. He was fast and easy, though not so much so as Lort Phillips's, which would go seven or eight miles an hour, and be comfortable to ride at that pace. My animal made scarcely any noise when I wanted to mount or dismount, — a rare virtue in camels; a slight jerk at the rope which did duty as bridle, and he would go off at a trot; he never had a sore back; and his coat was wonderfully clean, not covered with ticks as most camels' are.

We had lost numbers of our camels, had given away a good many, and for those that remained on our arrival at Massawa

we were offered such low prices, that we gave most of them away to the more deserving of our drivers and servants. We had nine goats; these, too, were distributed in the same way; the boy who looked after them was so lazy that he did not come in for them as he had expected to do. The year before, we had given them to the man who had had charge of them, and he sold them, and purchased a camel with the proceeds; the boy had heard of this, and entirely reckoned his chickens before they were hatched, as he had to take his departure without any present.

We had promised our Arabs the present of a bullock, on which to feast themselves on their arrival at Massawa, and had entrusted Suleiman to purchase one for their benefit; but on inquiring if he had done so, he said "No," adding, "People only bring hen cow, he no good, he make plenty shild!"

Our steamer, the "Messina," put off her departure until the morning of the 17th, when we all embarked about 8.30. The arrangements for getting on board were rather primitive, our servants and the steerage-passengers having to reach the steamer by swarming up a rope. Soon after we had got under way, it was discovered that "Molly" (Mahoom) was missing. The ship was searched in vain; when some one, happening to look over the side of the vessel, discovered poor "Molly" in the last stage of exhaustion and terror, hanging on to the end of the rope like grim death. Assistance was at hand, and he was soon placed in safety. It appeared that he was the last of the servants to come on board, and, having caught hold of the rope, the shore-boat rowed away, leaving him clinging to it. Climbing was not one of his accomplishments. An Italian sailor, who witnessed his predicament, hauled away at the rope in a feeble sort of way, but, finding Molly's weight rather too much for him, quietly let go, and gave it up for a bad job, leav-

ing him hanging over the vessel's side, a tempting bait for the voracious sharks.

There were two other steamers in port at the time, the "Khartoum," a gunboat, and a small Egyptian vessel. The latter was about to start for Belool, a place a little to the north of Assab Bay (the new Italian colony), where there was to be an inquiry into the massacre, about a year before, of seventeen Italians in that country; and I believe the Italian consul was going about it himself.

Besides the servants we had brought with us from Egypt, we were taking Achmet and the cook-boy as far as Souakim, and we made up altogether a large party; the only first-class passenger besides ourselves was a Frenchman, M. Michel, for several years the head custom-house officer at Massawa, who had just been dismissed, and his place filled by a native. Mr. Brewster, who held the same post at Souakim, had already gone; his position, too, being filled by an Egyptian. I imagine the government will find the revenue from these places considerably decreased, in consequence. During the passage to Souakim we caught seven fish by hanging out lines from the stern, the hooks being simply dressed with white rag. Three varieties were caught, among them some small tunny, and a fish very like a pike.

CHAPTER XXX.

Arrival at Souakim. — A Visit to Mr. Bewley. — Our Fellow-Passengers on the "Messina." — Arrival at Suez. — Accounts of Abyssinian Raid in English and Egyptian Press. — Suleiman's History. — We leave Cairo for England.

THE next afternoon, at half-past five, we arrived in Souakim; just at the right time, as, had we been a little later, we should have been obliged to spend the night outside the harbour, as it is impossible to enter after dark. We landed the same evening, and paid Mr. Bewley a long visit. We heard that the officers of the "Blues," with whom we had travelled in going down the Red Sea, had gone to Suez in the last trip of the "Messina." We also heard that English consuls had been appointed to Souakim and Khartoum, and none too soon, if what we heard were true, — that hundreds of slaves were still being shipped from the neighbourhood of the town to Arabia.

M. Elsen, the Belgian gentleman, had returned from the interior, and sailed for Europe. He had been very unfortunate in being ill most of the time he was in Africa; and, although he had collected a great many antelope-heads, they had mostly been destroyed, owing to their not being properly prepared. He had got no lions or elephants, but had shot one buffalo.

Arriving on the afternoon of the 18th, we did not get off again until the morning of the 22d, at nine o'clock: our time, however, was very pleasantly spent, partly in fishing, though with no great success. We had a great deal of cargo to take on board, and they were very slow about it; but we were told

the reason was, that they would have to wait some days at Suez, for a boat from Italy, before going south again, and so we were only too glad to take things easily. A great deal of the cargo consisted of ivory from the White Nile, and the rest was chiefly gum. The "Cosseir" arrived while we were waiting there, one of the Khedivial post-boats that had been newly done up, and was bound for Massawa, Hodeida, Aden, Zeilla, Tajurra, and Berbera. These last three ports have lately been added to these steamers' ports of call, as they are now under the Cairo government; and I trust the country from these points will soon be opened up. A small steamer, belonging to some merchants at Aden, has also lately commenced trading with these places, which are in the Soumali country. A second steamer came into Souakim while we were there, — the "Kassal Kerim," for cattle, a filthy-looking vessel, flying the Turkish flag.

We took several first-class passengers from Souakim, among others two Americans whom we had met at Shepherd's Hotel, before leaving Cairo. They had been sent out by the "Freedman's Aid Society" of New York, I believe, to endeavour to find out suitable places for establishing schools and stations for this society on the White Nile and at Khartoum. It is proposed to send out educated negroes from America, both ordained and laymen; the idea being, that they will be more suited to the climate, and have more influence over their black brethren, than white people possibly could have. These American gentlemen had travelled to Khartoum *viâ* the Nile and Korosko Desert, and had been up the White Nile in one of the government-steamers as far as the Sobat River, seven hundred miles south from the junction of the Blue and White Niles. Their scheme has the sanction and approval of the Khedive, who had promised, before they left Cairo, to aid them in the undertaking.

Then, too, we had as passenger the French consul from Khartoum, going home on leave of absence. He was taking with him a perfect menagerie of animals and birds, most of which he intended presenting to the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. His collection comprised two large *aboo geders* (literally, father of strength), — the same species of land-tortoise we had endeavoured to take home, and of which we did succeed in bringing one diminutive specimen, — some parrots of various kinds, ducks and geese from the White Nile, and a beautiful black-and-white monkey of a kind that had never previously been brought to Europe.

Another of our first-class passengers was an Egyptian official, a far better-educated man than one usually meets in such out-of-the-way places. He spoke French fluently, and was reading Sainte-Beuve and Lamartine on the voyage. We were delayed in starting, by some cattle we had to take on board, over a hundred, all from Khor Baraka, where they are very cheap; some of which, having got loose at night, took a walk "aft," much to the inconvenience of those passengers who were sleeping on deck.

Leaving Souakim, as I have already said, on the morning of the 22d, after a very pleasant and not disagreeably warm voyage we reached Suez on the 26th, early enough to breakfast at the hotel. We were very glad to find a good budget of letters waiting for us. By them we learned that our friends in England had been considerably alarmed about us. Both the telegrams I sent from Amedeb had gone wrong; instead of being sent on from Cairo to the address in London, which I had left at the former place, they were sent by mistake to my address in London, and my housekeeper returned them with my other letters; one I received at Massowah, the other at Suez.

Meanwhile all kinds of nonsense had been put in both the Egyptian and English newspapers; in the latter we were described as having been robbed of camels, baggage, and every thing, in the Atbara Mountains, — wherever they might be, — and to be making the best of our way to the coast on foot. Not exactly in newspapers, but something very like it. These veracious statements did not appear in the English papers until the end of March; and it was on Feb. 17 that I telegraphed to Cairo to say we were all well. Our deplorable condition had even been made the subject of a question in the House of Commons. We felt quite important at having so much interest taken in our welfare, and lost no time in telegraphing to our friends to say we were in a highly prosperous state, and on our way home.

We left Gerghis and Mahoom at Suez, to go to England in a direct steamer, *viâ* the canal. Suleiman, who had been with us for two winters in the Soudan, and had proved a most excellent, trustworthy fellow, my brothers and I resolved to take to England for the summer; and, as we required his services at Cairo, we took him on there with us.

The story of his life is an interesting one, and evinces far more pluck, combined with a keen desire for acquiring knowledge, than one generally meets with among Egyptians. He was born near Wady Halfah, at the second cataract; and, at the age of ten years, was sent to his uncle, a baker by trade, at Alexandria. He remained there some time; but his uncle ill-reated him, and he ran away to Cairo, where he took several situations as a domestic servant. Here he conceived a strong desire to learn to read and write: so, having saved enough money out of his wages to purchase a native apparatus for making tea, having a small grate underneath it to burn charcoal, — the Arabic name of which I forget, — and a sufficient

quantity of the requisite articles, such as cups, tea, sugar, and fuel, he left service, hired a little garret, and became a regular attendant at one of the native schools.

As soon as his lessons were over, he would rush off to his room, fetch his teapot, and go the round of the carriage-stands in the European quarter, crying, "*Tchai! tchai!*" ("Tea! tea!"), and so generally earned more than enough to cover the day's expenses. His relations in Cairo were at a loss to imagine how he maintained himself; for they knew he had left service, and spent his days in school. His great delight was to go to an uncle who was a grocer, living in the native quarter, to buy some provisions, and listen to the inquiries as to how he lived, and where he got money enough to pay for his lodging and education; but he kept his secret, and never ventured into that quarter to sell his tea.

At length some of his schoolfellows, meeting him on his evening rounds, told their master, who was so struck with the boy's perseverance, that he gave him permission to bring his teapot into school with him; where, in addition to what he sold in the streets, the boys bought from him; and some of them, being sons of well-to-do people, would pay him a trifle more than what he asked outside. After leaving school, he entered the service of Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, and went with them up the White Nile to the lakes, on the expedition Sir Samuel describes in his book, "Ismailia." On their return he obtained a place for him in the late Khedive's private dispensary; and, on his abdication, Suleiman followed him to Naples, where he remained for some time in the same employ.

At length, being, to use his own expression, "gusted" with the people in Naples; and, as a Mahometan, living in constant dread of eating pig's flesh in some form or other in his food, he returned to Cairo, and again entered into service. His master,

an Englishman, was just leaving Egypt, and, having no further need for his services, recommended him to us; and we took him to the Soudan.

We remained two days at Suez, and then all went on to Cairo, where we remained together until the 3d of May, when Colvin and Aylmer left for Suez *en route* for Bombay, and the rest of us for Alexandria, returning to England *vid* Venice. Before separating, Aylmer agreed to meet us the last week of the following December, in the city of Mexico. We all, except my brother Arthur, who remained in England, met there, and only a week later than the date named.

Although anxious to get to England, we were all very sorry to break up our pleasant party; and all look forward to another winter in the Soudan at no very distant date.

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